LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL: A NAMIBIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Learners in Namibian primary schools are seemingly not brave enough to stand and raise their voice on issues that concern them. This is what Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008) wrote after a study she conducted on the Learners' Representative Council (LRC) of a school in Namibia. She refers to a time when "the involvement of students in school affairs was seen by the regime as a political act and attempts by student leaders to involve themselves in educational issues were often quashed" (*ibid.*, p. i). This situation will be all too familiar to South African readers, where a public holiday, Youth Day, was declared to mark the apartheid regime's brutal treatment of learner protestors on June 16, 1976. While Namibia has not experienced events of such magnitude, the notion of learner voice is equally problematic and worthy of investigation. The absence of leadership development opportunities for learners has led to this research study which seeks to answer the central research question: *How can learner leadership be developed in a LRC?*

I used an interpretive paradigm, adopting a qualitative approach in the study. Concurrently, the study was framed and guided by the second generation of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as an analytical tool to achieve my research goal. The following questions guided the study in two phases. Phase one: What were the perceived causes for the non-sustainability of the learner leadership (LL) club at the school? Phase two: How is the notion of learner leadership understood in the school? How is leadership developed on the LRC? What enables and constrains leadership development of learners on the LRC?

The research participants were thirty LRC members from grades 6 and 7 and15 teachers who teach the LRC members. The principal and three HOD's were also research participants being part of the Senior Management team. One of the HOD's also fulfils the role of the guardian teacher to the LRC. A school board chairperson also participated in the Change Laboratory Workshop. Data was generated through multiple data sources such as questionnaires, individual interviews, a focus group interview and observation.

The findings from phase one of the study revealed that the learner leadership club's intervention was a success during the 2014 academic year, but the absence of the learner

leadership club as an extra-mural activity affected the sustainability of the club into the next academic year 2015.

Findings from phase two revealed that leadership opportunities did exist at the school for learner leadership development. However, a few challenges emerged relating to traditional views of leadership and constraining factors that could affect learner leadership development at the school. Thus, Change Laboratory workshops were held to find solutions to the challenges, in order to promote and enhance learner leadership development, hopefully for the future of the Namibian child.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my two mothers. My late mother Gebhardine "Gebby" Handura, and my second mother Erika Handura who raised me.

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List of Acronyms

BEd - Bachelor of Education Degree

CHAT - Cultural Historical Activity Theory

ELM - Educational Leadership and Management

L - Learners

ETSIP - Education Training Sector Improvement Programme

FGI - Focus Group Interview

GT - Guardian Teacher

HOD - Head of Department

I - Interview

LRC - Learners' Representative Council

MOI - Medium of Instruction

MPS - Marula Primary School

NANSO - Namibian National Student Organisation

NCSL - National College for School Leadership

P - Principal

RCL - Representative Council of Learners

SRC - Student Representative Council

T - Teacher

UK - United Kingdom

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the research study that plans to investigate how learner leadership can be developed within a Learner Representative Council (LRC) of a primary school in Namibia.

Thus, in this introduction chapter, I will first present the context and historical background for this study on learner leadership. I will then provide the rationale of the study, followed by the goal and research questions. Then I will briefly discuss the methodology and finally a brief outline of how the thesis is structured will be provided.

1.2 Context and background of the study

Please note the term 'student' is used when referring to international literature, however the term 'learner' will be used in the study referring to school-going children who are the focus of my study. Learner involvement in leadership activities is not a new phenomenon. Therefore, learners fighting for their voice to be heard and to have a share in leadership (such as the Soweto riots in 1976) are part of the apartheid history of South Africa. Namibia is no exception. South Africa was given the mandate by the United Nations to rule Namibia from 1920 through to its independence in 1990. As a result, events such as the Soweto riots inspired widespread student strikes in Namibia (Harber, 1993). The strikes started with an end-of-examination boycott at Martin Luther High School in Omaruru and after a few weeks, other students joined the boycott countrywide (Harber, 1993). Their involvement was to join the fight for social transformation of the apartheid system under the colonial South African Bantu Act of 1953 (Mabuku, 2009). According to Harber (1993), the Bantu Education system, which included an irrelevant curriculum together with other forms of discrimination, produced resistance amongst students countrywide. Furthermore, the system was organised based on race and ethnicity which left the elite white population exposed to compulsory

education, while for the black community, education was limited for vocational utility (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993). As a result, a student movement, the Namibian National Student Organisation (NANSO) was formed to spearhead the boycotting of classes in schools. Perhaps one might argue that the movement came about to fight against the Bantu Education system which privileged the elite few.

Subsequent to the infamous 1976 riots, boycotting classes became one of the alternative ways in which learners could raise their voice regarding the issues affecting them. This is reminiscent of 1986 when I, as a learner, was taken out of class to join others in solidarity to boycott classes. Learners taking part in boycotts did not have any rights or channels through which to raise their voice on issues affecting them, such as cleaning their environment or coming up with projects for the best of their schools (Tjihuro, 2014). To break the chain of silence, learners had to boycott to ensure that their voice would be heard. The recent student riots and demonstrations in South Africa (#feesmustfall) was a stark reminder of what can happen when learners feel they have no avenue to express their unhappiness and want to see some reaction.

A turning point came when Namibian political independence led to the implementation of policies such as the *Namibian Education Act of 2001* and *Language Policy for Namibian Schools of 2003*, and therefore the transformation of the education system. The *Education Act of 2001* introduced the implementation of the LRC in schools, and even though the policy was meant for secondary schools, many primary schools also implemented it and now have functioning LRCs. The LRC became the legitimate representative body of learners in schools, replacing the prefect and Student Representative Council (SRC) bodies. Therefore, the LRC, being the highest body of elected learners, was to exercise its mandated functions and liaise between learners and the school management (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MoE], 2001). In other words, the LRC body became the voice for learners and furthered the enhancement of democratic processes which were lacking in our schools.

Furthermore, the motivation for the establishment of the LRC was to promote the best interest and welfare of the learners (Namibia. MoE, 2001) and to give them an opportunity to make their voice heard. The policy also stipulates how learners are expected to democratically choose or elect their fellow learner leaders (Namibia. MoE, 2001, p. 18). As

democratically elected leaders, these learners would then be able to raise their voice in their home languages in accordance with the *Language Policy for Namibian Schools of 2003*. In this way the language policy also plays a role in the promotion of the silent learner voice, emphasising that "a person's identity is contained in the language and the culture you have inherited from your forefathers" (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture, 2003, p. 2). In a way the above-mentioned policies play an important role in addressing the lack of learner involvement in school leadership.

Thus, it is against this background that I chose to engage in this research to investigate how leadership can be developed within the LRC of the case study school. With this investigation one hopes for the concept of learner leadership to be introduced in schools to allow learner voice to be heard, within the established LRC structure. Learners still have very little voice regarding leadership and decision-making, moreover, learner voice is a new concept in the Namibian context and needs to be practiced effectively within the LRCs to prepare them to be contributing citizens within society (Mitra & Gross, 2009). In this regard, Mitra and Gross (2009) developed a hierarchy of learner leadership stages, where being heard is the most basic form of learner voice. In developing the learner leadership stages, Mitra and Gross (2009) argue that it allows learners to be heard, creating a feeling of belonging and learner ownership of their schools.

Furthermore, once the LRCs are heard, wider leadership opportunities might open up for effective leadership at the schools and leadership activities might not only lie with teachers but could be distributed down to the learners. Moreover, the leadership opportunities could contribute to a distributed leadership perspective of working in a collective social context (Timperley, 2007) as distributed leadership engages many people in leadership activities (Harris, 2004). Thus, distributed leadership might be useful to my study as the study revolves around individuals. Harris and Spillane (2008) are helpful when they say that in distributed leadership, activities are widely shared within and between organisations. Harris and Spillane (2008) further state that a "distributed perspective on leadership acknowledges the work of all involved in the leading and managing of the school". It is not enough to only think that leadership starts and ends in the principal's office and to ignore the development of leadership throughout the school – to achieve success in an educational organisation, leadership must be distributed (Spillane, 2006).

To summarise, this study will be informed by the notion of learner 'voice' – being able to give voice to the voiceless in the context of distributed leadership among the formal leadership of the school (principal, Head of Departments (HODs), the LRC and the school board). It is set against a background of discrimination and social inequity, and so is also transformational in its purpose.

1.3 Rationale of the study

During the 2014 Rhodes University Bachelor of Education Honours (BEd honours) course, students were required to establish learner leadership clubs at schools through the ELM elective. I was one of the students at that time and I established an intervention club with Grade 6 learners at the school in which I taught. The purpose of establishing clubs was to focus on leadership development of learners – specifically on the concept of learner voice – hearing and treating learners as people whose ideas matter (Grant, 2015). The club focused on the physical environment of the school by carrying out a litter campaign which was categorised as one of the focus areas the Namibian BEd honours students implemented in the 2014 academic year as reported by Grant (2015). After 2014, the established club failed to sustain itself into 2015, which triggered my interest in conducting this research. Furthermore, my interest was triggered further when Grant (2015) reported that the take-up of learner leadership club initiatives was problematic at other schools too. These were schools where other BEd honours students established their clubs as well.

As well as the above, my encounters with these learners in the 2014 learner leadership club intervention who had leadership potential, but lacked the support to develop their leadership abilities, motivated my research topic. Moreover, personally working with these learners as a teacher and a researcher at the time, I believed that once they were given the necessary guidance and support they might develop into visionary leaders. Even more, should these learners be given the opportunity to raise their voice, the school environment could change and improve their learning (Flutter, 2006). With this in mind, I hoped the current research would unpack the learners' leadership potential.

Furthermore, I am an African parent and Namibian by birth and grew up in a culture where children did not speak before their elders. This became another point of interest for my study.

According to Chinsamy (1995) the concept of immaturity in children, traditionally denies them the right to exercise their responsibilities. In this case study, where young learners are the focus, they might well lack the confidence to exercise the responsibility of raising their voice. Therefore, culture might limit learners' opportunities to platforms where they can raise their voice on issues that matter to them and as a result, parents or teachers might speak on their behalf at times (Fielding, 2001). Furthermore, there might not be platforms were learners can help make decisions in the school system, thus contributing to poor leadership development.

It is therefore important that school leadership is enlightened on learner leadership concepts, ensuring that learners become involved in school leadership and decisions. As a result, collaboration and collective activities might be practiced and through this study, leadership opportunities might be available to all, including learners, as all can lead (Williams, 2011).

It is for the above reasons that I decided to embark on the journey of this research and investigate how leadership can be developed within the LRC of a primary school. Thus, I believe by the end of the investigation, perhaps learner voice and effective leadership might be developed at schools through a range of leadership structures such as the LRC and after-school clubs. Hence, social justice, democracy and equity might be developed within learners (Grant & Nekondo, 2016).

Next, I will present the goal and questions of the research.

1.4 Research goal and questions

The goal of this study is to investigate how to develop leadership within the LRC of Marula Primary School in Namibia. The investigation was done in two phases: firstly, to reflect on the 2014 learner leadership club, focusing on why it ultimately did not sustain itself, secondly, to investigate the development of learner leadership in the LRC of 2016, drawing on lessons learned in the 2014 project. As a result, phase one gathered data about the experiences of the 2014 club members and phase two tracked the activities of the 2016 LRC and engaged them on the question of leadership development.

To address the goal the following questions guided my study in these two phases.

Phase one:

1. What were the perceived causes for the non-sustainability of the learner leadership club at the school?

Phase two:

2. How is the notion of learner leadership currently understood in the school?
3. How is leadership developed in the current LRC?
4. What enables and constrains leadership development of learners on the LRC?

Method and tools used in the research will be presented next.

1.5 Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative case study method. According to Merriam (2009) a case study "is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). Furthermore, a case study might contribute to the general understanding of the phenomenon. To understand the phenomenon further, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was used to frame the study. CHAT is a theory that helps position individuals to contribute to meaningful changes (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2004). Hence, two Change Laboratory workshops were held over two days. The reason for two workshops with different participants was that a combined workshop – where learners and adults were present – could have been inhibiting for the learners, who were after all only 12 or 13 years old. Sannino (2008) explains that "Change Laboratory is an interventionist method developed and used within the framework of activity theory to promote change in the work place" (p. 237). Therefore, my study explored the phenomenon of learner leadership, to understand how it could be developed within the LRC at one case study school. The study is situated within the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm aims to discover how individuals think and form ideas about the world and how the world is constructed socially (Thomas, 2009). Furthermore, as a researcher using an interpretative paradigm I had to understand how the participants interpreted and constructed their experiences on learner leadership development. Using the CHAT lens, human life and development were viewed as well.

I used various tools to collect my data, namely, two individual interviews, a focus group interview, questionnaires and observation. The research participants included thirty LRC members, 15 teachers, the principal, three HOD members (one was the guardian teacher) and the chairperson of the school board. Concurrently, second generation of CHAT was used as an analytical tool.

As a researcher I had to consider ethical issues around the research for validity. Before the commencement of the study, consent agreements were finalised with the participants and permission to conduct the research at the school was gained. Since the study involved minors – the learners – permission was sought from their parents. Silverman (2000) urges that learners are not competent to agree. Validity measures were strengthened as data collected from the various sources were triangulated. Triangulating data helps to confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 2009). To have an overall idea of the thesis its outline will now be presented.

1.6 Thesis outline

Chapter one presented an overview of the study. I discussed the context and background of the study, the research goal and questions, a brief note on the methodology and finally a structural summary of the thesis outline.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the literature that is relevant to the study topic. The literature presented relates to the concept of leadership, developing leadership in the contemporary view rather than the traditional view. CHAT as the theoretical framework underpinning the study will also be presented in this chapter.

Chapter Three gives an outline of the research methods and paradigm. The research site is briefly highlighted, and I provide the process of how the participants were sampled. I further provide an outline on the data collected and how it was analysed. Finally, ethical and validity issues are highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter Four will present raw data collected from interviews, questionnaires, the focus group interview and observations. Data presented are grouped into themes that emerged. Chapter

Five discusses the data presented in Chapter Four in relation to the literature and relevant theories.

Chapter six concludes the thesis. I present the summary findings and the significance of the study. Recommendations to the practice and for further research are given. Limitations of the study are spelt out in this chapter. Finally, a conclusion to the study is given.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Education is the basis of every individual's development for personal change. If we therefore want to see these changes in future generations, we need to invest in their education, teaching them in their schools and social settings. Doing this might lead to the expansion of learner leadership in schools, ultimately leading to changes in society and the world.

In this chapter, I will first draw on the background of leadership and management to open an understanding of the origin of educational leadership and then move on to its definition. This will be followed by a discussion on the relationship between the two terms of leadership and management, as the concepts overlap and coexist in our schools today. The distinction of leadership and management in the study is vital. Leadership is a concept which informs us on learner leadership. Management on the other hand is often used, as people do not know the difference between the two concepts and tend to use management when they actually mean leadership.

Next, I will present the evolution of leadership looking at the past as it informs the present, as well as the future. I will then move on to discuss the concept learner leadership. Focus will turn to how learners can be developed in leadership aspects in their social context, being the school. Furthermore, contemporary views will be presented as they inform distributed leadership which provides a framework for understanding learner leadership. The next section will discuss distributed leadership that informs learner leadership practices. Having understood learner leadership in the distributed leadership framework, a theoretical framework underpinning the study – CHAT – will be discussed next. Hence, second generation of CHAT will be used as an analytical tool to understand human actions in distributed leadership practices.

I will now explore the terms leadership and management in the following sections.

2.2. Leadership and management

As I mentioned above, the concepts of leadership and management overlap; therefore, giving some background to these terms, as well as defining and distinguishing them, might give a better understanding of the study.

2.2.1. Background on leadership and management

As both concepts draw from the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM), this prompted me to briefly look at their background, to gain an understanding as to how their origins inform us on leadership development in schools. Bush (2003) begins to enlighten us on the origin and development of educational management as a distinct discipline chronicled by different authors. According to Moloi and Ngcobo (2008), the field was established notably in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America. In addition, it is further argued that educational management was first applied to industry and not schools (Bush, 2008). Hence, by looking at the origin of the field, effective leadership development in schools was absent and a need arose for a "leadership development framework" (Moorosi & Bush, 2011, p. 61).

Furthermore, the need for leadership development led to the setting up of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in the UK in the year 2000 (Bush, 2003). Similarly, Moorosi and Bush (2011) note the same need for commonwealth countries, of which Namibia and South Africa are members. Moorosi and Bush (2011) urge for proper leadership programmes to raise leaders' confidence and enhance leadership learning. Likewise, Nikodemus (2013) sees the same need in Namibia where he wrote a provocative book with secret keys to "unlocking the leadership potential abilities in our schools" (p. viii). Concurring with the above view, Harris (2003) notes that "school leaders are viewed as holding the key to resolving a number of problems currently facing schools" (p. 10). Thus, with this background, leadership development might give birth to learner leadership development, that could contribute to school effectiveness.

The transition of the discipline from management to leadership moves us to define both concepts.

2.2.2. Definition of leadership and management

An attempt to define the concept of leadership and management has become challenging as there are no fixed definitions and different definitions have been merged from varying literatures because of their common usage. Thus, Bush (2003) concurs that there is no agreed definition of leadership. However, in exploration, Christie (2010) begins by defining leadership as "being understood as a relationship of influence, directed towards a goal or outcomes". Christie (2010) further frames "leadership in terms of social relationships" (p. 695). With this in mind, I feel that a LRC as a social group, could influence change in schools through their leadership. In brief, Bush (2008) alludes to the fact that most definitions of leadership "reflect the assumption that it involves a social influences process" (p. 2).

Therefore, to strengthen the social influence, leadership is about "learning together and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively" (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p. 17). For the aim of this study I might agree with the above view, as the study is to develop leadership among learners and this could be achieved if collaboration is enhanced through leadership which is carried out in teams (Bush, 2003). Furthermore, leadership is the ability to "guide a school through various challenges by achieving a vision based on shared values" (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008). The above definitions will help to more fully understand leadership in a school context.

Management on the other hand, is defined as "an organisational concept" (Christie, 2010, p. 695). Furthermore, Astin and Astin (2000) define the term management as a process of preservation and maintenance of an organisation. Hence, in the school context, as an organisation it would be the school management who would be concerned with the "internal operation of educational institutions and executive function carrying out agreed policy" (Bolam, 1999 as cited in Bush, 2008, p. 1). Furthermore, it means that management will be involved in dealing with systems, structures and the culture of the school and day-to-day operations (Naidu et al., 2008). Drawing from both definitions I will argue that management activities have less significance to my study of learner leadership development.

Having explored the different definitions of leadership and management, I now move on to the distinctions between the two concepts that show they are not the same and how this might influence my study of interest.

2.2.3 The relationship between leadership and management

Leadership and management are carried out in organisations concurrently, thus confusion arises when to manage or when to lead, as both activities might be carried out by one person; for example, the principal in the school context. In agreement, Bush (2007) argues that while managing well, one often exhibits leadership skills. This section would like to try unpack the confusion.

Both concepts are necessary for the effectiveness of a school, hence making a clear distinction might be difficult. Moreover, Christie (2010) points out that management and leadership are used next to each other without clear distinction. Therefore, Bush (2008) begins by "linking leadership with change while management is seen as maintenance of activity" (p. 272). In addition, Lunenburg (2011) further distinguishes the two concepts by saying "leaders are concerned with understanding people's beliefs and gaining their commitment whereas managers carry out responsibilities, exercise authority and worry how about things get accomplished" (p. 1).

As a result, Lunenburg (2011, p. 1) presents a table with clearer distinctions measured with operational categories suited for the school context.

Table 2.1 Distinctions between leadership and management

Categories	**Leadership**	**Management**
Thinking process	Focus on people.	Focus on things.
Goal setting	Articulates a vision; Creates the future	Executes plan; Improves the present.
Employee relations	Empowers colleagues; Trust and develop.	Controls subordinates; Directs and co-ordinates.
Operations	Creates change.	Manages change.
Governance	Uses influence.	Uses authority.

Even though the distinctions are unpacked, and leadership might have an influence on my study, both leadership and management are important to balance and maintain schools. Hence, leaders are needed to challenge the status quo and inspire others, whereas managers

are also needed in developing and maintaining the smooth running of schools (Lunenburg, 2011).

Having discussed leadership and management, next I turn to leadership theories, exploring how the reactions of traditional views became the origin of contemporary views of leadership. These views inform my research, as it is evolving in a contemporary era.

2.3. Evolution of leadership theories

This section discusses leadership theories to raise awareness of the evolution of leadership that informs learner leadership. This section will draw on how traditional views of leadership evolved and how leadership development was experienced through different phases and how these developments might best inform us on the current leadership theory that the study is trying to unpack.

2.3.1. Traditional views of leadership

Leadership has evolved over the years through different eras, with theories such as: personality/trait, behaviour and contingency, up to the transformational era. Discussing the evolution might enlighten us on some lessons from the past that focused on individuals as leaders. In contrast, present leadership is about developing and influencing others to lead in a distributed view of leadership. The journey begins with the discussion of trait theories.

2.3.1.1. Trait theory

Early theories focused on what made leaders effective by measuring leadership with personality. Hence, the reasoning was that a successful leader was to be placed in a formal position of leadership because of personality that was examined (Horner, 1997). Furthermore, the leaders inherited personalities made them strong leaders (Kings, 1990). This conflicts with current leadership theory which does not focus on a leader's personality but on the interaction of leaders with followers. Current leadership theory focuses on leadership where multiple individuals take up the responsibilities (Spillane, 2006). Moreover, a leader's personality might not guarantee good leadership, as no clear answer regarding traits associated with great leadership, was found (Horner, 1997).

The trait theory further suggested that leaders were special people, born with innate qualities (Rajan, 2009). Similarly, Coleman (2005) explains there existed theories which suggested

that leaders were "not made but born" (p. 9). Coleman (2005) points out an obvious weakness of the view, that there could be no effective leadership training if leaders are seen as being born with innate qualities. If leadership is seen as an interaction with others, training might increase leadership qualities and promote better understanding of effective leadership.

Furthermore, in line with the great men theory, trait theory measured leadership against a list of characteristics or traits. As a result, the identified traits were able to differentiate leaders from non-leaders, Rajan (2009) emphasises. This notion of trait thinking is still alive in our schools currently, as I observed from my BEd Honours intervention, when the LRC was selected by teachers who looked at certain traits for effective leadership (Tjihuro, 2014). On this note, I concur that identifying personality traits for effective leadership will not motivate leadership development in schools. Hence, Kings (1990) points out that "no single trait or groups of characteristics was associated with good leadership" (p. 45). For instance, personality traits that emerged from my study of learners considering themselves to be strong and confident, might not guarantee good leadership, as the LRC needs collaboration and teamwork for effective leadership.

Furthermore, Kings (1990) points out that the era of the theory of personality proved to be too simplistic. This meant that there needed to be another explanation to explain the concept of leadership and behavioural theory seemed to fill this need. This moves us into the next step of understanding the evolution of leadership development.

2.3.1.2. Behavioural era

In the hope of addressing better leadership styles to match the contemporary leadership view, the advancement took a different direction from trait theory. Instead of studying personality traits, the theory focused on developing behaviour traits (Kings, 1990). Based on that, the right behaviour a leader exhibits outwardly was enough to establish effective leadership (Horner, 1997). Therefore, for effective leadership, identified behaviours could be taught to people to become leaders (Horner, 1997). This view is in agreement with Lambert (2003), who says that everyone is born to lead and in the same way born to learn. Looking at contemporary leadership views, identified behaviour would not be enough to achieve a leadership goal. It would take interaction and collective leadership practices, to promote effective leadership.

In the search for an improvement in leadership within individual leaders, during the behavioural period two important behaviours of leaders were identified at the Ohio State and Michigan University. Rajan (2009) notes that the two behaviours were initiating structure, which meant that "leaders emphasis is on accomplishing tasks" and "consideration for individuals (people orientation)" (p. 27). These identified behaviours are still operational in our schools where school leaders are to complete a ministerial document called the *National Standard and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia* to measure tasks completed by the teachers. This process may push teachers to work individually to complete tasks faster, neglecting collective activities that might increase job satisfaction, as Hatcher (2005) implies.

However, although the theory highlights the consideration of people and tasks, it fails to consider the environment a leader needs to operate within to be effective. As leadership evolved, contingency theory seemed to answer or fill that gap.

2.3.1.3. Situational and contingency theory

Contingency theory extended from the behavioural theory as the third trend and its advancement was made in the form of the Fiedler model (Rajan, 2009). Contingency is a theory that states that the success of a leader is dependent on the situation he finds himself in. Therefore, Kings (1990) further clarifies the "Fiedler contingency theory" (p. 47), by emphasising that leaders need to be placed in situations that suit them to be effective. Therefore, Knott-Craig (2007) notes "different situations require different kinds of leadership" (p. 27).

According to Uushona (2012), "in contingency theory organisational success is hardly achieved through a single variable namely leadership" (p. 14). Thus, two variables defining effectiveness of a leader are considered to be leadership style and the leader's situation (Horner, 1997). This meant that leaders had to change situations to suit their leadership (Knott-Craig, 2007). The above view is in line with Bush (2003), who fully concurs that leadership works best in this era if leaders read the situation they find themselves in and evaluate how to adapt their behaviour to it; this means that they will change their attitude to accord to the needs of particular individuals (Coleman, 2005). Thus, if leadership is introduced in a collaborative form, individuals might not try or might have to adapt their behaviour to suit a situation.

Furthermore, seeing the importance of individuals within the contingency era, a path-goal theory was developed. Kings (1990) elaborates that the theory was more about providing enabling conditions for followers' success. On this note, Coleman (2005) argues that leaders might vary their behaviour towards individuals by exhibiting possible behaviours of delegating, directing, and supporting. The notion of this theory was that an individual leader would encourage followers to develop behaviours that would enable their desired goals; this might be seen as an act to transform followers solely by the leader. Currently, the view on leadership views has shifted and leaders and followers interact collectively to achieve their desired goals. Hence, transformational leadership is our next exploration of the evolution.

2.3.1.4 Transformational leadership

The evolution of leadership now moves us into understanding how a leader is concerned with transforming individuals for organisational goals. Transformational leadership looked to be a promising phase in the evolution of leadership development. Foster (1989) points out that its promise lay in the fact that leaders have the ability to inspire and transform individual followers. Furthermore, Rajan (2009) notes that the leader builds trust and develops followers into leaders. The process of transformational leadership is defined by Bass and Stogdill (cited in Knott-Craig, 2007, p. 29) as:

> Transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interest of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the group and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group.

Transformational leadership could have been a promising leadership form for my study, but my study is in the era where leadership has moved to where leaders transform followers using a shared, distributive leadership. According to Kings (1990), transformational leaders have the ability to be visionary to generate goals for an organisation and the ability to transform followers to see the vision or goal. Moreover, Foster (1989) points out that transformational leadership is the ability to communicate this vision to followers. In my study context, it might not be the leaders who communicate the vision of the school. There should be no limit on who should be in leadership, as learners' views can also be considered, and they can be seen as contributors (Woods, Bennett, Harvey & Wise, 2004).

To this end, transformational leadership has four critical and independent social processes (Carlitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002), which transformational leaders exhibit.

Coleman (2005) highlights them clearly:

- **Idealised influence** – Transformational leaders are seen as role models by their followers; leaders consider others or their followers' needs.
- **Inspirational motivation** – Followers are inspired by their leaders, they are involved in envisioning an attractive future for their schools or organisations.
- **Intellectual stimulation** – Innovation, creativity and questioning are encouraged by leaders, thus promoting a positive and supportive environment.
- **Individualised consideration** – Special attention, support and encouragement of followers are fostered by the leaders.

The above process could have been of value to my study if the focus was not on an individual leader who uses these processes on his followers, to achieve his vision. According to Harris (2003) the transformational action explores the leader-follower dichotomies where leaders are superior to followers and followers depend on leaders. Hence in my study, the focus will be on an interactive process of teachers and learners being involved collectively.

Transformational leadership looked promising as an era that drew and blended many aspects of previous eras (Kings, 1990). Kings (1990) further concludes that the era has not endured the rigours of empirical testing well. With this notion in mind, it seemed that a review of leadership theory was needed that might reveal a new direction for future leadership practices. Perhaps contemporary views of leadership might inform us on the new direction that learner leadership should be taking.

2.4. Learner leadership

Slow development of learner leadership at my school stimulated my interest in exploring the views of literature, on how learner leadership is understood and developed. This is of course the focus of my study. The discussion will move on to the factors that hinder leadership development, followed by the motivational aspects of learner leadership development.

For this purpose, learner leadership is understood as leadership that has moved away from the traditional thinking of leadership into a contemporary view of leadership. It can be argued

that it is leadership that is not limited by formal authority and thus can be undertaken by individuals and groups other than the principal (Grant & Nekondo, 2016). Further, it is leadership that can encourage collective participation in sharing in the school's decisions by raising the learners' voice to shape their lives and the lives of their peers (Mitra & Gross, 2009).

According to Whitehead (2009), learners raising their voice will be an essential opportunity for leadership development at an adolescent level and they might then have the potential to enrich their schools (Uushona, 2012). Hence, for learner leaders to be developed, the first thing that needs to be emphasised is that they need to be heard, before they can have an active role in school decision making. On this note, learner voice that drives learner leadership will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.1. Learner voice

Before we continue, please note learner voice will be used in this study instead of student voice which is an international concept. Learner voice is a strong theme in the literature on learner leadership and through practice might prepare learners to be engaged and contributing citizens (Mitra & Gross, 2009). If learners are brought into school discussions, perhaps the concept of learner voice might be accepted in schools (Mitra, 2006). The acceptance of learner voice was realised at the dawning of democracy both in Namibia in 1990 and in South Africa in 1994. Hence, at the dawning of both democracies, the Namibian education system established LRCs in schools, whereas the South African education system embarked on a democratisation process of providing a voice for learners to express themselves (Mabovula, 2009). In addition, Mabovula (2009) further acknowledges that the recognition of learner voice helps to give voice to the voiceless, who are the learners in this case. Furthermore, putting learner leadership into practice might create a space for leadership where young people can speak up on what they regard as important and valuable (Smyth, 2006).

According to Mitra and Gross (2009), promoting learner voice might create many opportunities for learners to raise issues and speak up. As a result, having such opportunities might enable learners to bring about changes in schools. Mitra and Gross (2009) further suggest that when students are heard, they learn more about their experiences in schools. Moreover, allowing learners to be heard, creates a feeling of belonging and student ownership towards their schools (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Most importantly, if they are allowed to be part

of drafting important policy documents, such as the constitution on school governance, this may spark their interest in participating in school governance (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008).

Learners being involved in decision making at schools, broadens the concept of distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000; Lashway, 2003 as cited in Mitra, 2006, p. 315). Learners and teachers share roles collectively and in addition, staff members learn from their learners (Fielding, 2001). Moreover, teachers and school leaders move to meet the learners and engage them in relevant and interesting school experiences (Angus, 2006). Shield (2004) concurs that equally, this strong relationship provides socially just and deeply democratic opportunities for the learners (as cited in Grant, 2015, p. 95). I will discuss more on the views of the distributed leadership perspective, later in the chapter.

Having such opportunities might increase the learners' potential to participate in school activities. According to Uushona (2012), participation in school programmes will help to identify learners' qualities. Hence, the next section will look at learner participation.

2.4.2 Learner participation

Leadership can be practised through active participation; if schools engage learners in participatory activities they might inspire learners by putting them in the driving seat (Flutter, 2006). In agreement with the above view, learner participation in leadership activities could increase their attachment to their school as well (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Flutter (2006) also highlights that learners' attachment might benefit schools and explains that there are many benefits of learner participation. Hence, I may agree with Flutter (2006) who states that "the participatory approach develops new skills and ideas for learners and teachers" (p. 187).

Furthermore, participatory approaches contribute to effective strategies that improve the learning environment (Flutter, 2006). Similarly, Thomson and Gunter (2006) posit that students should not only be involved in decisions about their own learning, but about their classes or school as a whole. On this note, using learner voice as a tool for action might contribute to learner leadership through participation in school activities to achieve common goals (Archard, 2013).

Even though learner leadership encourages students to participate in school activities and encourages them to act as a voice for others, "schools tend to fall short on preparing youth to

develop and lead such activities" (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 522). Accordingly, I will now discuss the factors that hinder learner leadership development.

2.4.1. Challenges inhibiting learner leadership

Even though there is a vast amount of literature that has been written on how learner leadership is to be practiced and developed, there are still limitations that inhibit leadership development. Hence, a few of these challenges will be discussed below.

2.4.2. The poor implementation of policies

According to Grant and Nekondo (2016), there are many educational policies in place however, they are silent on issues of learners' leading (e.g. policies such as *Towards Education for All* and *Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme* (ETSIP)). This is why Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008) supports this view by saying that emerging guidelines to educational reform do not mention the role of students in school governance. This is also the case in South Africa, where the RCL Guides give minimal and conditional roles to members (Mabovula, 2009).

Furthermore, the exclusion of primary school learners as leaders in policy could hinder leadership development, which my study plans to explore. This is evident from the Education Act (Subsection 60 (1), p. 33) which stipulates that:

> Every state secondary school must establish a body of learners to be known as the Learners' Representative Council in accordance with the prescribed guidelines which must determine the composition and duties and functions of such a council.

According to Mabovula (2009) this is a similar case to South Africa, where secondary learners have a right to be heard through their participation in the liberation of the country.

Policies that are powerless to bring about changes to learner leadership, might raise hostility amongst learners. Contributing to this view, Smyth (2006) argues that learners may develop hostility towards schools because their lives and experiences are ignored by schools and curricula. This would be extremely unfortunate as learners are indeed the majority stakeholders in schools (Uushona, 2012). Hence, Grant and Nekondo (2016) urge that learners be treated as people whose ideas matter. The discussion will now move into how the

exclusion of learners from decision making, might further hinder their leadership development.

2.4.2.2. Absence of learners in decision making

Traditional backgrounds contribute to a poor level of decision making among learners in schools. Traditionally, children are not allowed to raise their voice before their elders, perhaps because they are regarded as immature (Chinsamy, 1995). For instance, when I was growing up, I was not allowed to raise my voice in front of my parents as it would have been disrespectful, and I was only a 'child'. As a result, teachers and parents generally end up speaking readily on behalf of young people (Fielding, 2001). This is of course unfortunate, as learner voice is a key tool that could be used in different ways by sharing in decision making in schools (Grant, 2015). However, Angus (2006) argues that this voice is most likely to be disillusioned, ignored and even denigrated by schooling systems. Moreover, Mabovula (2009) further claims that learners might be given a voice which is then often used as a mere "stamp of approval" (p. 220). Unfortunately, as this is likely the case in most schools, this might hinder learner leadership development, especially in primary schools.

Furthermore, this hindrance might create less opportunities for students to have a democratic voice (Westheirmer & Kahne, 2003 as cited in Mitra & Gross, 2009). In addition, the hindrances might lead to learners' frustration and could have a negative impact on education, as democratic participation of learners might be alienated (Mabovula, 2009). This claim is affirmed by Smyth (2006) who says that students develop a feeling that schooling is simply not worth it, as they are not seriously involved.

Could it be that the absence of learners in decision making roles is due to the lack of effective learners' training in schools? This will be our next discussion.

2.4.2.3. Lack of effective training

The *Namibian Education Act of 2001* as mentioned earlier (Section 2.4.2.1) established LRC structures in secondary schools, however there is no reference to learners' training (Shekupakela- Nelulu, 2008). In the context of Namibia, Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008) notes that "there seemed to be no regional or national training programmes in place or any other form of induction to prepare learners for their new responsibilities" (p. 56). In favour of this view Uushona (2012) concurs that absence of LRC support programmes may suggest that

each school can use its own discretion and is at liberty to train their own LRC. Does this perhaps resonate with the view that these learners have leadership abilities and training is not needed?

On this note, the notion of heritable traits that "leaders are not made but born" should not be administered in schools to avoid effective leadership training (Coleman, 2005, p. 9). Surely, training enhances schools' effectiveness and improves job performance. (Brungardt, 1996 as cited in Collins & Holton, 2004, p. 218). On this reflective note one may urge schools to carry out LRC training if they are not functional, for the growth and expansion of knowledge of learners' leadership potential and performance (*ibid.*)

Even though there are challenges that learner leadership might experience, there should be a way forward and a motivation towards learner leadership. This is expanded on below.

2.4.2 Motivation of learner leadership towards democratic citizenship

For a democratic society to function, people should work together as a group with the aim of achieving a goal (Mabovula, 2009). In this case it would be the teachers and learners working together in the school context to enhance learner leadership. In the same line, Angus (2006) encourages schools to be promoted as social institutions with democracy. Moreover, if we are to develop learner leadership in a democratic society we might consider the key principle of democratic school governance, decisions that are to be based on collaboration and participation of all that are affected in the school (Sithole, 1995 as cited in Mabovula, 2009, pp. 219-220). With this principle in mind, schools will be required to be more concerned with developing learners with the individual freedom to voluntarily participate with others in their communities (Starratt, 2007).

Therefore, initiating learner leadership clubs in schools might contribute to a more democratic society. Moreover, if platforms are given to learners to express themselves on what matters to them most, this might develop a voice amongst learners (Grant & Nekondo, 2016). For example, during the 2014 project of my Rhodes University BEd honours course, the club at my school established that litter was the problem that mattered the most to them (see Chapter One). Concurring, Grant (2015) reveals that learner leadership clubs offer a leadership space or platform from which learners can speak up and discuss what they consider important. Furthermore, the purpose of leadership clubs is also to develop leadership

using a multifaceted- approach, which includes experiential development or developing leadership within the context (Whitehead, 2009). In my view, this purpose will evoke leadership development in schools and learners might then have the opportunity to develop their voice and they might be heard. This system of personal opinion might then be encouraged (Mabovula, 2009).

It is with this in mind that exploring the pyramid of learner voice by Mitra and Gross (2009, pp. 523-524) might increase learner voice in schools further.

Level one of the pyramid is being heard – considered the most basic form of learner voice. At this level, learners' accountability and learners' achievements are visible. The ability to increase engagement is high because the learners are being heard and learner leadership is able to be developed. Hence, at this level as a teacher and Honours student at that time, I listened to the learners as they came up with different thoughts on what mattered most to them at the school. As a result, through the process of categorising what mattered from the questionnaires that were completed by other learners, I listened and guided the learners as they determined that 'litter' was of most concern to them at the school at that time.

Level two of the pyramid develops the learners into responsible citizens in their communities. This is where the learners work with adults to make changes in the school. Working with adults will also develop learners into authentic leaders (Whitehead, 2009). In developing the learners and to help shape their leadership skills, I collaborated with the club members as an adult, to assist with the planning on how to address the identified concern of litter and how learners could drive the intervention.

Level three develops the building capacity; the learner voice can extend to other young people in solving problems in their schools. At this level, by solving the problems of others, club members are enabled to "share in the leadership of the learners' voice initiative "(Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 524). The involvement allowed learners to question and criticise each other's suggestions and ideas on litter at the school.

Learner leadership is a form of leadership process that moves and develops in this contemporary era. That will be the next focus.

2.5 A contemporary view of leadership: a distributed perspective

The shift to a contemporary view of leadership was to replace the notion of traditional views of leadership which has been the focus of most literature on leadership up to now (Harris, 2004). The shift was from an organisational leadership to a more social practice of leadership, in which learner leadership practice is the focus as it occurs in a social context. Due to this, the shift is likely to address the need for distributed leadership in our schools, which is a form of leadership that is not dominated by one person, but resides in a group (Williams, 2011).

In addition, Woods (2005 as cited in Williams, 2011, p. 191) regards distributed leadership as "collective action towards a common goal". Learners, who belong to a group carrying out leadership activities, will experience in the act of collaboration, a sense of contributing to new positive goals for their school. On this note, I explore the significance of distributed leadership as a contemporary view of leadership that will inform my topic area of learner leadership development. The discussion unfolds as I begin to define distributed leadership for more clarity.

2.5.1 Definition of distributed leadership

Hartley (2007) indicates that distributed leadership is a concept that is in vogue; as a result, numerous authors have defined the concept albeit broadly. According to Harris (2004), distributed leadership has become a discourse in school leadership and in line with this thinking, distributed leadership might be ideal in schools as it engages many people in leadership activities (Harris, 2004). Supporting this view, Muijis and Harris (2003, p. 440) further imply that distributed leadership is:

> A social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders.

This might imply that teachers and learners in schools would have to share roles and functions and work in a collective social context as interactions are distributed across (Timperley, 2007). Hartley (2007) therefore points out that this action might result in leadership turning into something of a social movement. Indeed, the social movement might create leadership opportunities for all, including learners who are the focus of this study.

Lumby (2013) argues in the same line, that distributed leadership is opening up leadership to all who might have relevant expertise.

Furthermore, social leadership creates "social dynamics" (Williams, 2011, p. 191) of people starting to partake in decision making. Likely the social dynamic will expand as leadership takes place in a group, where people can participate (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Mooley & Somaroo, 2010). Moreover, being a distributed leadership form, voices might be raised and "push for school change" (Mitra, 2006, p. 316). In brief, if we look at the definition of distributed leadership, it is a leadership practice that influences organisational improvement (Harris & Spillane, 2004). Now the discussion will turn to exploring how distributed leadership might be practiced.

2.5.2. Distributed leadership practices

Investigating school leadership practices might help us to understand how leadership is being distributed. Moreover, distributed leadership makes a positive difference at schools thus investigation is essential to see if distributed leadership is well practiced. As a result, to understand distributed leadership perspectives, a habit of collaboration among the participants should be embraced. According to Spillane (2006), distributed leadership is a "collective interaction among leaders, followers and the situation" (p. 4). Even more so, understanding the perspective of distributed leadership might help us to reflect and analyse this leadership practice (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Hence, in analysing this leadership practice, the three elements, as shown in Figure 2.1 are important.

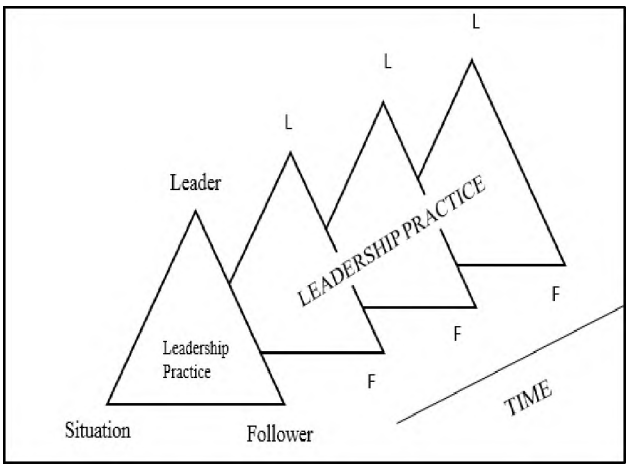

Figure 2.1 Leadership practice from a distributed perspective (Spillane, 2006, p. 3)

From the above diagram, Spillane (2006, p. 4) notes that distributed leadership is a product of joint interactions of these three elements:

- Leadership practice is the central and anchoring concern;
- Leadership practice is generated in the interaction of each element;
- The situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice.

Moreover, the interactions of the three elements might show us how leadership practice is stretched over the social and situational context of the school (Spillane et al., 2004). The idea of stretching leadership might well develop learner leadership, as roles and responsibilities are distributed across. Therefore, distributed leadership is "moving beyond the principal or head teacher to include other potential leaders" (Spillane, 2006, p. 3). Moreover, these potential leaders will jointly interact as team members, therefore Harris and Spillane (2008) concur that distributed leadership focuses on teams rather than individuals. Working in teams might enhance leadership to the extent that the members will work collectively towards new goals (Hatcher, 2005).

Furthermore, learner leaders being involved in collective interactions might start sharing in decision making in schools and this could enable learner voice in the process. As a result, Mitra and Gross (2009) highlight that "learner voice can help to increase the tension and focus on pressing issues when needed" (p. 522). According to Shuttle (2007), "learner voice is about true democracy within an institution" (p. 33). That means that if distributed leadership is to be stretched in the social dynamic, democracy needs to be sustained by "developing thoughtful citizens who can make wise choices" (Noddings, 2005, p. 11).

Harris (2004) posits that learners' participating in collective interactions might contribute to a distributed approach that could enhance leadership and directly influence decisions taken. In support of this approach, participation will involve multiple sources of guidance and direction (Harris, 2004). Understanding how leadership actions are stretched or distributed might solve the lack of leadership support that learners receive from their teachers, as they will be involved in a collaborative and collective action of guidance and direction of leading as "all can lead and must lead" (Williams, 2011, p. 192).

In brief, distributed leadership might have positive outcomes for learners, once it is stretched over multiple individuals, in improving leadership practices and empowering everybody within the school community.

However, Harris (2004) alerts us to critiques of this leadership practice, and this will be discussed below.

2.5.3 Distributed leadership critiques

Leadership practice that has been critiqued, need not always be viewed in a negative way. Critiques are necessary to reshape ideas and theories and perhaps these critiques might help to reshape distributed leadership systems in schools. Concurring with the above view, Foucault (2000d as cited in Gillies, 2013) argues that criticism is essential for transformation and change (p. 35). Harris (2004) starts by alerting us to a few criticisms of distributed leadership that might hinder it in being implemented effectively. To begin with, school structures and cultures cannot be ignored on the list of critiques.

For example, schools might have fixed organogram structures that indicate who does what in the school or "demarcation of positions" (Harris, 2004, p. 20). Harris (2004) implies that those that are in traditional leadership positions, for example principals, HODs and phase heads, might not easily respond to a distributed leadership approach as this could threaten the status quo. Hence, these fixed structures can prevent individuals from taking up leadership roles and responsibilities collectively.

Furthermore, this might contribute to another challenge within the top-down hierarchy leadership approach that must now conform to the requirements of distributed leadership where there is a need for a "redistribution of power" (Lumby, 2013, p. 583). MacBeath (2004 as cited in Lumby, 2013, p. 583) emphasises the notion of "relinquishing power and ceding control to others" as well. I will draw on this point as a hindrance to distributed leadership development as those in appointed positions or vulnerable positions (Harris, 2004) might find it hard to give up power due to the accountability for school performance or improvement that is laid upon their shoulders. It might also be the case that principals possess authority and are accountable to their schools as a result of official policies (Grant, 2006).

The challenges are not only experienced with those in top positions at schools. The demarcation of departments and the subjects within those departments, present significant barriers to the implementation of distributed leadership (Harris, 2004). This implies a hindrance to collaborative activities as perhaps no one might be willing to work within a department that they are not assigned to. Therefore, Lumby (2013) posits that there are colleagues "who do not feel like they are part of what is going on" (p. 588). Taking this view into account, LRC members who are demarcated or assigned to specific roles might also neglect the view of collective leadership, as each member will only be concerned with accomplishing their assigned tasks.

Another challenge that I want to highlight which we sometimes overlook, is the followers who function within groups collectively. Critique suggests that since they operate in groups collectively, not all will contribute to distributed goals effectively, knowing that the task will be completed without their input. Concurring with the above argument, Lumby (2013) notes that it becomes a choice not to think critically, to become comfortable and move along with the choices of the majority. This indeed might affect distributed leadership roles of learner leaders, as they might start neglecting their roles because of being in a group.

Furthermore, even though followers are empowered and have control of their activities through distributed leadership there is no "evidence of its work in practice" (Hartley, 2007, p. 203). Therefore, Williams (2011) notes that distributed leadership is implemented as a "misguided delegation and in worse cases as coercion" (p. 197). The last critique might hinder positive strategies on how distributed leadership can be practiced effectively. Hence, the next section will explore how poor distributed leadership might affect social justice in schools as a community.

2.5.4 Distributed leadership through social injustice

Due to power relations, those in formal positions might want recognition from their followers which could hinder effective collective distributed leadership, thus contributing to social injustice in our schools (Blankstein & Houston, 2011). Moreover, recognition of those in formal positions could be expected from these learner leaders as they have to respect their elders, a habit that arises from their cultural backgrounds as they are regarded immature in most cases (Chinsamy, 1995). As a result, social injustice could be experienced, since

distributed leadership has not helped in opening up leadership roles to those in none formal positions such as learners (Lumby, 2013). Moreover, this is what Foucault (2000d as cited in Gillies, 2013) notes as "having skewed power relations in social groups" (p. 61). In addition, power constructs society "like money circulating in the community" (Lumby, 2013, p. 584). Those in formal positions hold on to power and therefore will not distribute leadership evenly (*ibid.*). Thus, change in leadership practice to include others of varying ages, gender and experience will be hard to consider (Lumby, 2013).

In particular, with regards to gender, "leadership is unequally open" (Lumby, 2013, p. 589). In line with this view, Williams (2011) concurs that even though women are in the majority in the teaching profession, they are under-represented in senior leadership positions. Looking back in our society, most top leadership posts, such as principals, are filled by men. Williams (2011) further regards it as being a case that "women teach and men manage" (p. 195). Hence, this further leads to a misunderstanding of women or girls' capacity to and capability of leading, according to Blankstein and Houston (2011).

According to Gronn (2000), this section has alerted us to the monopoly of power that can contribute to social injustice. Hence, on this note, the ability to determine effective leadership framed by a distributed leadership perspective as an analytical tool, might be considered useful (Spillane et al., 2004). According to Spillane et al. (2004), distributed cognition on how leaders, followers and the situation interact, can be explored to better understand leadership practice.

Another important aspect of my research, is to explore and understand how CHAT frames this study. CHAT forms the conceptual underpinning of distributed leadership, so it is closely related and offers a language of description as well as an explanatory framework for a leadership study such as this. Therefore, CHAT offers a perspective of understanding human action and moreover a theoretical foundation framing distributed leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004) will be our next journey.

2.6 Theoretical framework

This section will try to unpack why Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) will be used as a framework for my study. The theory seeks to analyse how individuals develop within practical social activities (Sannino, Daniels & Gutièrrez, 2009). It is a theory that generates or creates new forms of life (Sannino et al., 2009). Hence, using CHAT will help me to analyse and understand how the current individuals under examination, the LRC, can create a new life through their leadership development.

2.6.1 Development of CHAT

This study will use CHAT as a "potent framework for understanding and changing the world" (Engeström, 1987, p. xiv). CHAT, a historically evolving collective activity system as a prime unit of analysis was initially formulated by Vygotsky, Leontiev and their collaborators in the 1920s and 1930s. This was to view human life and development (Stetsenko & Arievitich, 2004). CHAT evolves in three generations: the first generation, second generation and the third generation (Engeström, 1987, p. xiv). Even though the study will be framed in the second generation, I found it useful to discuss the first generation and the third generation as they form part of CHAT evolution.

2.6.1.1 First generation of CHAT

Vygotsky began formulating the first generation of CHAT around the concept of mediation being the centre of human consciousness development (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Furthermore, mediation as a concept enables human consciousness development by interacting with artefacts and tools. Vygotsky proposes the idea that "relations between the subject and object is mediated by culturally available tools" (Mbelani, 2014, p. 1). Hence, this idea was used to understand the process of how the human mind is formed (Daniels, 2008). Moreover, the mediation action was influenced by Marxist theory – understanding individuals' social relations in which they exist (Wertsch, 1991). Vygotsky shows how mediating artefacts influence human behaviour by studying the basic mediated action triangle as shown in Figure 2.2.

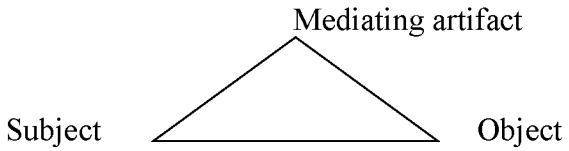

Figure 2.2 First generation activity system (Adapted from Engeström, 2001)

According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010) the **subject** is the individual engaged in the activity. The **mediating artefact** tools can include artefacts, social others and prior knowledge. The **object** is the goal of the activity which is triggered by motives. Furthermore, in the first generation of CHAT the individual can no longer be understood without his or her cultural means and society can no longer be understood without individuals who use and produce artefacts (Engeström, 2001, p. 134).

The limitation of the first generation of CHAT, is that it focuses on an individual rather than on groups. Thus, the first generation ignores the importance of other elements – rules, community and the division of labour – interrelated in the activity system. As a result, the first generation was overtaken by the development of the second generation of CHAT which was modelled on a "collective activity system" (Engeström, 1987, p. 5).

2.6.1.2 Second generation of CHAT

Leontiev developed the second generation of CHAT on a different perception of activity systems, using his famous example of a "primeval collective hunt" (Engeström, 2001, p. 134). The story illustrates how participants can be involved in a collective activity distributing roles effectively. In the story the one group chases the animals away towards the other group who kills it (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). The two groups carry out a collective activity which is the focus of the second generation of CHAT, where individuals and group actions are collaborative by nature (Engeström, 2001). According to Bakhurst (2009), Leontiev differentiates between action and activity; action is conducted by an individual or a group, whereas an activity is undertaken by a community collectively.

Moreover, in the second generation, activities are linked with the object, trying to understand how the participant's mind develops while working on the object. As there might be possibilities of working with people at the school to investigate issues, share ideas and resolve problems collectively, this might be realised within the second generation of CHAT. (Agbedahin, 2012). As a result, Engeström adds three other elements to expand the basic Vygotskian triangle: the rules, community and the division of labour, to show the importance of analysing the participants' interactions within an activity system.

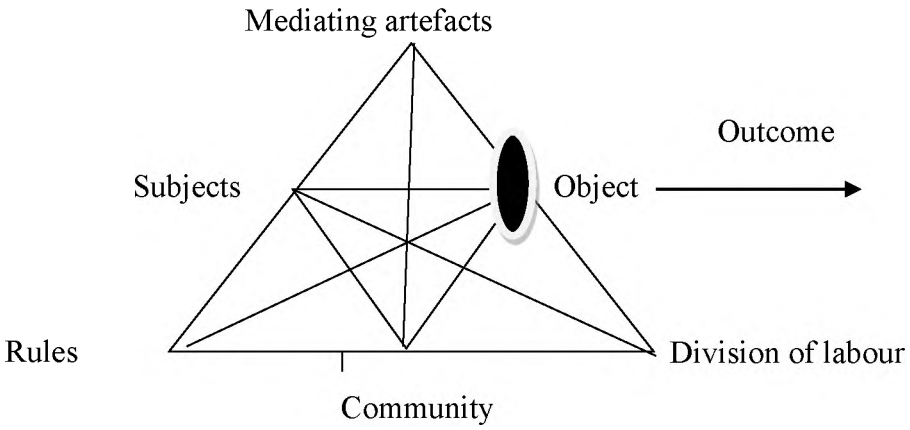

Figure 2.3 Second generation of CHAT activity system (Engeström, 1987)

Extending from the first triangle (Figure 2.2) in this study, **rules** would be the government and school policies that guide the LRC, **community** would be the teachers, parents, learners and me as the researcher. The third element would be the **division of labour** relating to different allocated roles and tasks the LRC carries out. Finally, the **outcome** would be the results of the object that has gone through multiple transformations to finish up as learner leadership development at the school.

However, the second generation could not answer questions of diversity and dialogue between different traditions and this became a limitation. Therefore, the third generation of CHAT was proposed by Engeström and colleagues (Daniel, 2004).

2.6.1.3 Third generation of CHAT

The rationale of the third generation helped in furthering the analyses of the LRC activities in the second generation, which was most suitable for my study, thus the inclusion of the third-generation concepts. According to Daniels (2004), the third generation of the activity system was proposed by Engeström, who intended to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogues, multiple perspectives and a network of interacting activity systems. The perspective of dialogicality is when the learning process involves many views and parties (Mbelani, 2014). Furthermore, third generation of CHAT is when a minimum of two or more activity systems interact and are used as a basic unit of analysis.

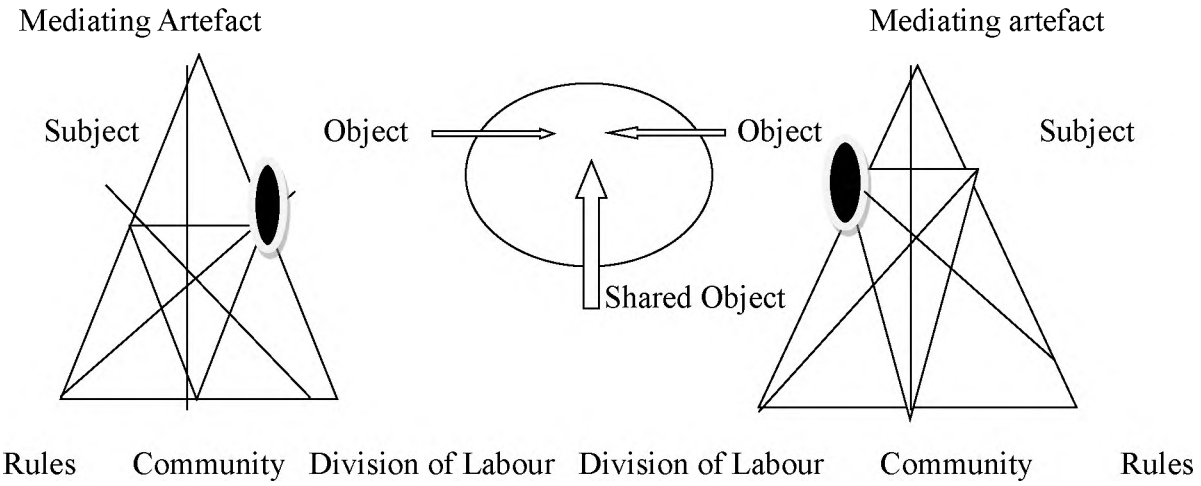

Figure 2.4 Third generation, two interacting activity systems (Engeström, 2001)

Thus, the principle of third generation summarised in Figure 2.4 helps us to understand the central activity system of the LRC in the second generation and how it interacts with other elements (such as teachers and parent) working together towards the potential shared object of developing leadership.

2.6.2 CHAT principles

CHAT is characterised by five principles (Engeström, 2001, pp. 136-137):

- The *first principle* is that a collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems, is taken as the prime unit of analysis. The notion of this principle is that the LRC as the unit of analysis participates in activities that develop leadership and will be understood well if they are in relation to other elements.
- The *second principle* is the multi-voicedness of activity systems. An activity system is always a community of multiple points of view, traditions and interests. The division in an activity creates different positions for the participants, the participants carry their own diverse histories, and the activity system itself carries multiple layers and strands of history engraved in its artefacts, rules and conventions. The study ensures that actions and ideas on learner leadership development are informed by many views and voices as they interact.
- The *third principle* is historicity. Activity systems take shape and get transformed over lengthy periods of time. Their problems and potentials can only be understood against

their own history. The LRC needs to be analysed by looking at the history of the school which shapes the way they understand learner leadership.

- The *fourth principle* is the central role of contradictions as sources of change and development. Furthermore, individuals interacting collectively in an activity system can contribute to the surfacing of internal tensions and contradictions, which become an important focus of the second generation. As a result, participants become aware of the contradictions within the activity system and they start developing new activities for the future (Sannino, 2009). Moreover, adapting these contradictions becomes the driving force of change and development (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Therefore, contradictions are not problems or conflicts but rather historically accumulating structural tensions within activity systems. The identification of contradictions in an activity system will help me focus on the root cause of problems within the LRC structure. The focus will be on what is the fundamental issue that causes the non-development of learner leadership at the school. Historical contradictions were analysed within the second generation of the activity system. The types of contradictions are noted below, according to Daniels (2008, p. 125). However, given that the study is framed by the second generation of CHAT, the primary and secondary contradictions will be summarised in more detail. Primary contradictions are within an element of the central activity. This could be when the LRC themselves lack discipline and this affects their leadership development – primary contradictions are within the subjects of the activity system. Likewise, secondary contradictions are between the elements of the central activity. This could be when teachers fail to support the LRC in carrying out their duties effectively – secondary contradictions are between the subjects and the community.
- Finally, the *fifth principle* proclaims the possibility of expansive transformations in activity systems. Activity systems move through relatively long cycles of qualitative transformations, which is the next focus.

2.6.3 Expansive learning

Expansive learning is a process where the analysing, experimenting with and the reconceptualising of the object, in this case leadership development, in the activity take place (Sannino, Engeström & Lahikainen, 2016). The learning process focuses on the subject (LRC) and on how they acquire identifiable knowledge and skills that will change their behaviour towards effective leadership. Hence, the people (LRC) and the school as an

organisation will learn something "that is not stable, not even defined or understood ahead of time" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137).

Moreover, within and between the elements, expansive learning will be involved to create new knowledge and new practices for the emerging activity of leadership development – where learning will be embedded and constitutive of qualitative transformation in the entire activity system (Daniels, 2008). Hence, expansive learning as a qualitative transformation requires the participants to move away from old given actions of leadership and take new initiatives of leadership in order to transform the activity system (school environment). According to Daniels (2008), such transformation will be triggered by the introduction of new technology or sets of regulations. The transformation in the expansive cycle begins with the subject questioning the accepted practice and gradually expanding into a collective movement, where the teachers and parents will start constructing a new form of collaborative practice (Engeström, 1987). With this collaborative practice they "seek to address new and emerging problems, creating new knowledge and building local flexibility" (Knott-Craig, 2016, p. 106).

The full cycle of expansive learning is to understand a collective journey, seeing the participants struggle through development transformations in the activity system, moving across collective Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Vygotsky redefined the concept to deal with learning and development at the level of collective activities (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Furthermore, ZPD is redefined as the space for expansive transformation from action to activity; participants will search for solutions to contradictions (Masilela, 2017). Hence, participants solving the contradictions, construct a new motive and a new long-term engagement in their activity system as part of the expansive learning cycle. Engeström acknowledges the importance of this learning as he draws on Bateson's theory of learning.

Table 2.2 Bateson's levels of learning (Adapted from Daniels, 2008, p. 126)

	Description	**Example**
Level I	Conditioning through the acquisition of responses deemed correct within a given context.	Learning the correct answer and behaviour in a classroom.
Level II	Acquisition of the deeper-seated rules and patterns of behaviour characteristic to the context itself.	Learning the hidden curriculum of what it means to be a student.
Level III	Radical questioning of the sense and the meaning of the context and the construction of a wider alternative context.	Learning leading to change in organisational practices.

Engeström draws our attention to learning level III, where the subject will be involved in the form of learning that questions the sense of their leadership, reformulating problems and starting to construct new tools and knowledge that they will use as they engage with the leadership problems.

The above constructed knowledge and the development of the activity system as the object of expansive learning is fully completed over two to three years (Mukute, 2010), but due to the time constraints of my study, the expanded cycle is limited to the first three stages of expansive learning cycle *(ibid.)*. However, the outline of the expansive learning process that the study carried out is explained below:

- Stage 1: Questioning: Participants were encouraged to question, criticise or reject some aspect of the current, accepted leadership practices at the school.
- Stage 2: Analysis: The practice was analysed in two ways:

a) Historical analysis – they seek to explain the situation by tracing the learner leadership origins and evolution.

b) Actual – empirical analysis – they further seek to explain the situation by constructing a picture of its inner systemic relations.

- Stage 3: The participants were involved in constructing a simplified model of new ideas that explained and offered a solution to the problem of learner leadership development.

Having elaborated on expansive learning theory, the focus will now turn to Change Laboratory as it aims at supporting expansive learning (Engeström, Sannino & Lemo, 2016).

2.6.4 Change Laboratory

Change Laboratories are designed in such a way that participants are under-taking tasks that require expansive learning actions (Engeström, Sannino & Virkkunen, 2014). Engeström, Virkkunen, Hella, Pihlaja and Poikela (n.d.) further define Change Laboratory as a method for developing work practices by practitioners. The Change Laboratory method is used to develop work practices in organisations such as schools by the participants; in this case, learners and teachers will create dialogue and debate among themselves. Hence, work practices in schools can be developed through "collective, cognitive and material conceptualisation of the object of the activity" (Sannino, 2008, p. 235). These developmental activities were done in two Change Laboratories to facilitate deeper transformations through the set-up process.

2.6.4.1 Change Laboratory set-up process

Change is supported by 3 x 3 set of surfaces presenting the work activity in the Change Laboratory workshops (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). First, ***the mirror surface*** is used to present and examine experiences from work practices, particularly problem situations and disturbances, but also novel innovative solutions (Daniels, Cole & Wertsch, 2007). Interviews, questionnaires and observations were used as mirror data to present distracting and conflicting issues in the school needing further investigation. Hence, mirroring the data to the participants in the two different workshops, enabled them to interpret and engage in modelling new solutions.

Secondly, ***the model /vision surface*** is reserved for modelling the past, present and future of the activity system and inner contradictions in it (Daniels, 2008). In addition, the steps of the expansive learning cycle (Section 2.6.3) were used to analyse the current activity and model new solutions (*ibid.)*.

Thirdly, ***ideas and tools surface*** is reserved for ideas and cognitive tools. In this surface the study used interviews and questionnaire responses to trigger the ideas and tools for the future of the activity.

Table 2.5 on the next page illustrates how the surfaces as a possible tool of analysis in the Change Laboratory process could be presented.

Table 2.5: The use of the surface of representation in a possible course of analysis in the Change Laboratory (Adapted from Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 18)

	Model /Vision	**Ideas/ Tools**	**Mirror**
Future	**7** Envisioning the future structure of the activity system in which the current contradictions would be overcome.	**8** Modelling the new tools and ways of working necessary for realising the vision. Designing first experiments with new tools and new ways of working.	**9** Follow-up data about the feasibility of the designed new tools and ways of working as well as about needs for their further development.
Present	**6** Modelling the most important changes taking place in the elements of the activity system as well as historically evolved inner contradictions the changes have created within the activity system.	**2** Shared concerns, identified problem areas in the joint activity. Ideas for further analysis. Solutions and ideas to identified problems.	**1** Samples of problem situations in the practitioner's daily work with the object of the joint activity (for instance disturbances and ruptures in serving clients or in central processes of the joint activity). Videos, interviews, documents.
Past	**5** Modelling the central features of the past structure of the activity. Analysing the nature of the current phase of the transformation of the activity.	**4** Identification of periods and turning points in the development of the activity.	**3** Data concerning important historical changes in the activity system.

After discussing and elaborating on CHAT, I will briefly point out the potential of using it in my study in the next section.

2.6.5 Potential of CHAT for the study

CHAT was proposed as a framework for the study that analyses what the LRC members are doing at any given time in a school, as an activity system. The cultural behaviour mediated by artefacts such as leadership training, use of language and body gestures enables the subjects, the LRC in this study, to regulate them from the outside.

In addition, the human activity in the second generation of CHAT was taken as the basic unit of analysis in the study. According to Nardi (2005), having an activity system grounded in an object-oriented concept, the subjects were analysed on how they engaged in the purposeful objective activity of developing leadership within the LRC structure, working with other elements of the second generation. Hence, the desire that motivated the participants to satisfy the object was analysed through the CHAT lens. For example: how the rules guide the LRC leadership; the division of labour procedures for carrying out the tasks and how they are specified; the social and cultural structure of the school community; how they constrain and enable the leadership activity to achieve its targeted goal or outcome of learner leadership development.

Furthermore, CHAT was used to understand dialogues, multiple perspectives and the network of interacting activity systems of the LRC and the teacher-parent. Moreover, the expansive learning cycle process was used to create new knowledge that was useful. The participants were seeking to understand the origins of the leadership phenomena and studying its history. Finally, in the process of the study, contradictions were acknowledged as becoming the driving force for change and development (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) of LRCs socially at the school.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter is a review of literature mainly focusing on leadership and management in terms of the background, definition and distinction of the concepts. Hence, learner leadership as the focus of this study was explored as to how it can be developed and factors that hinder this

development. Furthermore, the chapter explored the evolution of leadership, moving into the contemporary view of leadership, with distributed leadership being realised as the new form of leadership. Finally, the second part of the chapter focused on CHAT as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The evolution of the theory was outlined and its importance to the study was emphasised.

I now turn my focus to the methodology chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The term methodology according to Stanczack (2007), is the way in which researchers employ tools and techniques in the field to generate and gather data. Furthermore, Kaplan (1973 as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p. 45) emphasises the aim of methodology as helping us to understand possible terms in a broader sense, such as the leadership development of the LRC at the case study school.

Thus, in this chapter I will discuss the research methodology strategies and procedures used to explore how leadership is developed within a LRC in a Namibian primary school. The chapter will further cover the research goals, a brief explanation of the research paradigm and the research approach. Furthermore, the research site, how the participants were sampled, the data gathering, generated between October 2016 to January 2017, and analysis processes will follow. Finally, I touch on ethical issues, followed by the conclusion.

Now my attention turns to the research questions guiding my research.

3.2 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study in two phases.

- **Phase One**

1. What were the perceived causes for the non-sustainability of the LL club at the school?

- **Phase Two**

2. How is the notion of learner leadership currently understood in the school?
3. How is leadership developed on the LRC?
4. What enables and constrains leadership development of learners on the LRC?

My attention now turns to a discussion of the research paradigm.

3.3 Research paradigm

In order to understand how learner leadership is developed within the LRC at my school, an interpretative paradigm was used adopting a qualitative approach for my research. This is because it is chiefly exploratory: its purpose is to discover new ideas and insights or even generate new theories (Croker & Heigham, 2009). Moreover, the qualitative approach opens our eyes to new ways of thinking, by asking and answering questions about our world (Lichtman, 2014). By looking at the above views, using the qualitative interpretive paradigm in my study surfaced new ways or ideas, by answering the research questions on how learner leadership is developed.

Furthermore, the interpretative paradigm is appropriate for studying situations where people interact socially and professionally and where learning and development happens through social practices. Thomas (2009) further emphasises the main point about the interpretative approach, which is to discover how people think and how they form ideas about the world and how the world is constructed socially. This too is an important consideration in my study. Due to the fact that the LRC, who are the focus of the study, interact socially, second generation of CHAT was used to frame the study as an analytical tool. Thus, CHAT provides a methodology which examines how groups of people can work on the same object and jointly develop new knowledge over new problems (Engeström, 1987; Daniels, 2008 as cited in Mukute, 2009, p. 152). The use of CHAT helps to bring participants' past experiences and circumstances into focus (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

I now discuss the research approach in the next section.

3.4 Research approach

In this study I adopted a qualitative case study. A case study is a "systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest" (Maree, 2007, p. 75). According to Stake (1995), a case study helps to understand people and to hear their real-life stories in different situations. This stimulated my interest in embracing this approach. Furthermore, on a similar note, Henning and Van Rensburg (2004

as cited in Rule & John, 2011) identify hallmarks for qualitative research – which are, to be understood and having an in-depth inquiry (p. 61). Similarly, Simons (2009) notes that these hallmarks might be practised during the examination of an instance in action. In my study, learner leadership was my instance to be investigated to illustrate a socially constructed world (Simons, 2009).

Furthermore, I used a case study approach in this study to gain thick descriptions of the phenomenon, by answering the research questions using a variety of data collection tools (Rule & John, 2011). Data from various participants such as the ex-club members of the 2014 learner leadership club, other learners, teachers and parents within the activity system, was collected and analysed. One of the features of case study research is the study of a phenomenon within its real-world context, which is what this study aimed to do. Here again the importance of context is emphasised as I turn to the description of the research site.

3.4.1 The research site

As mentioned earlier, the research was conducted at Marula Primary School (pseudonym) in the Khomas region, Namibia. The name of the school reflects the way the school started, driven by the desire of the people in the community. The school opened its doors on 13 January 1986 with six teachers and about 100 learners. Today the school has approximately 1500 learners on its roll, of which 300 are boarders, as well as 46 permanent teachers, four teachers on an annual contract, two school secretaries and 11 cleaners.

The school leadership is comprised of a principal, six head of departments, six school board members, a LRC and various school committees (working groups). It accommodates learners from Pre-Primary to Grade 3 who are taught in Otjiherero, Oshindonga and Khoekhoewab as mediums of instruction (MOI); however, learners from Grade 4 to 7 are taught in English as the MOI. Furthermore, the school has 35 classrooms each with a storeroom and 13 flushing toilets. The administration block has eight offices, a well-equipped school library, a spacious staffroom and fully equipped library. Moreover, the school has teachers' flats on the premises that accommodate novice teachers.

Since some learners come from families who are socially and economically disadvantaged, the school has a feeding programme, run by the Ministry of Education, which provides soft

porridge during break times at the school. The feeding programme is a national programme that is designed to cater for learners at primary schools in Namibia (Vaeta, 2015).
Furthermore, the focus of this study – the LRC, are selected by teachers and consists of learners from Grade 6 and 7 – 20 boys and 20 girls. Learners do not have a role in this selection process. The LRC are monitored by a committee of four teachers and receive training provided by the school.

The following section will look at how the participants of the research were sampled.

3.4.2 Sampling and participants

According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011), a sample is the population that the research needs to focus on. Cohen et al. (2011) further urges the need to collect data from a smaller group, in such a way to present knowledge gained (p. 143). In my case, sampling might enhance the quality of my research, as participants were selected to suit my research. In support of this view, Rule and John (2011) add that it is impossible to select everyone, thus only those "people who can shed most light on the case" (p. 64) is who the researcher should choose.

I adopted purposive sampling to select my participants for the research. Purposive sampling was used to build a sample or a group that was "satisfactory" (Cohen et al., 2011) for my research needs. Furthermore, the participants were selected because of some characteristics they possessed, that made them the holders of the data the research needed (Maree, 2007). Now I present my selected participants – all chosen as people who would bring knowledge and experience, to the case study.

From the total number of 40 LRC members, 30 LRC members were selected from Grade 6 and 7 since they were the seniors at the school and they might have understood the concept of learner leadership more easily. In the same line, 15 teachers who taught Grade 6 and 7 were selected as they work with these learners on a daily basis and since they understand and have knowledge on how learner leadership might be developed within their respective subjects.
The principal and three HOD's were also research participants being part of the Senior Management Team. One of the HOD's also fulfils the role of a guardian teacher to the LRC. HOD members play a key role in the governance and management of a school and therefore

their input was valuable. School board parents are part of the school community who would also like to see the school going in the right direction in its governance. From the entire school board members, only the school board chairperson participated in the study at the Change Laboratory workshop. This cross-section of stakeholders provided rich global pictures of the phenomenon, through data collection.

3.5 Data collection

For the purpose of this research, several data collection methods were used to ensure a rich set of data that could provide opportunities for triangulation. Creswell (2014) defines triangulation as the use of "different data sources of information by examining evidence from the source and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" (p. 120). The ability to triangulate strengthens the validity of findings, and the more methods used in the research the more confidence I had as a researcher to make strong claims. As a result, the following data collection tools were employed: questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interview, and observation.

The data was collected in two phases; during phase one, a questionnaire was given to the 2014 learner leadership club members at the end of the academic year. An individual interview was done with the principal in 2015, to answer the research question of phase one. To answer question two in phase two, a questionnaire was given to the fifteen teachers, three HOD's, one fulfils the role of the LRC guardian teacher, the principal and to the 2016 LRC members during the month of October 2016. Furthermore, during phase two to answer question three of the research, the following tools were employed: an individual interview was conducted with the LRC guardian teacher on the 19th of October 2016; an observation was done on the 14th of April 2016 at the LRC leadership training; and a focus group interview was held with only twelve selected members from the thirty LRC members of 2016 on the 17th of January 2017. Finally, to conclude phase two and to answer question four, an informal observation was done during break times twice a week during October 2016. Thereafter, the data collected was analysed using the CHAT lens and presented to the participants during the Change Laboratory workshops on the 1st and 2nd of February 2017 respectively, to model solutions in answering question four further.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Please note that the purpose of the questionnaires for the 2014 and the 2016 groups were different. According to Thomas (2009) questionnaires are a "written form of questions" (p. 173), which participants can answer on their own (Rule & John, 2011). Furthermore, administering questionnaires is efficient as data can be collected from a large group at the same time (Rule & John, 2011). I gathered data from teachers, school management team (HODS' and the principal) and learners in two phases using questionnaires as a tool. Phase one was with the ex-club members of the 2014 learner leadership club and it was at the end of the year before leaving to high school. Twenty-two learners completed the questionnaire to answer why the club did not sustain itself (Appendix A). The second phase was from the 2016 LRC members (Appendix B1), teachers, LRC guardian teacher, HODs and the school principal (Appendix B2). These were completed over a week in October 2016, to gather views on learner leadership and factors that enable and constrain leadership development at the site.

The participants answered open-ended questions in their own words, which hopefully encouraged openness and honesty (Croker & Heigham, 2009). Moreover, my absence during the administration of the questionnaires might have encouraged the openness and honesty of the participants, as there was no pressure placed on them (eg. Cohen et al., 2000). From the second phase, out of 30 LRC participants, only 21 returned the questionnaires. On the side of the teachers, all returned the questionnaires while out of six management members, four returned the questionnaires. Generally, a pleasing response rate.

3.5.2 Interviews

According to Flick, Von Kardorff and Steink (2004), an interview is a possibility of enquiring openly about situational meanings or collecting every day theories. Maree (2007) further clarifies an interview as a two-way conversation: the interviewer asks questions to participants to collect data. In addition, Kothari (2004) singles out the advantage of an interview over other tools, in that they provide opportunities for "oral verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral responses" (p. 97). Semi-structured questions were set to guide the conversation, with follow up questions that emerged from the discussion. Moreover, questions were framed to supply knowledge needed for the case (Cohen et al., 2000).

I conducted a one-on-one interview with the principal to obtain his view on why the 2014 learner leadership club failed to sustain itself during phase one of the research (Appendix C1). The next interview was with the guardian teacher of the 2016 LRC, to get his view on how leadership development was carried out at the training the school held during the second phase of the study (Appendix C2). According to Maree (2007), participants' knowledge and social reality are constructed when interviews are conducted to obtain rich descriptive data. All these interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder with the participants' consent and transcribed immediately afterwards.

I encountered challenges with technology after finishing recording the principal's interview – I realised there was no data recorded at all and that shocked me. I then explained my dilemma to the participant and he agreed to reschedule another interview immediately. Simons (2009) assures that equipment can fail and leave us stranded with no data.

Furthermore, the data collection process could not be completed by October 2016 due to examination preparations and the process continued into early 2017. Hence another interview was held with a focus group of 12 LRC members at that time.

3.5.3 Focus group interview

According to Maree (2007) a focus group interview is based on group interaction to generate many views and perspectives, in this case on learner leadership. The aim of the interview was to hear the 2016 LRC's perspective on how they experienced and valued the leadership training programmes that took place in the second phase of the study. The interview was conducted during break-time in a time-frame of fifteen minutes at the school office as it was more quiet and suitable. Twelve LRC members were randomly selected for the interview; six boys and six girls. Before the commencement of the interview, I provided guidelines on how a focus group interview is conducted. This was done to ensure that all participants were provided with an opportunity to speak. Thus, during the focus group interview, the participants were encouraged to fully participate in order to clarify aspects (Maree, 2007). The interview provided an in-depth view on how learner leadership could be developed at the school (Appendix C3).

One of the goals of a focus group interview is to invoke points of view and this was experienced as the participants built on each other's ideas when answering the research questions set (Flick et al., 2004). The process yielded a large amount of suitable data that took time to be transcribed, as every LRC member had much to say during the interview. Now the discussion will move on to explore observation as another data collection tool.

3.5.4 Observation

I used observation as a data collection tool to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon being observed (Maree, 2007). Maree (2007) further argues that observation is the "systematic process of recording the behavioural pattern of participants without necessarily questioning them" (p. 83). Furthermore, the observation was done to discover the "norms and values" (Simons, 2009, p. 55) of the school society towards learner leadership. As per the school culture, their yearly planned leadership training was held on the 14th of April 2016 with the LRC and my interest was to observe how leadership development on the LRC was carried out at the training. I also was interested in their engagement with the concept of leadership development during the training. An external facilitator from NANSO was invited as the key speaker. As the researcher, I documented my observations pertaining to leadership development during the training.

Figure 3.1 LRC training

The next phase of the observation was done at the site to "watch carefully" (Thomas, 2009, p. 183) for what could enable and constrain leadership development on the LRC after the training. According to Flick et al. (2004), observations are done to investigate the process of interaction between the participants.

I was supposed to observe how the LRC members interacted during their meetings, which unfortunately never took place. However, informally I got to observe the LRC's interaction during break-times and observed how they carried out their roles, noting any power imbalances within the LRC and the leadership culture of the school. The observations were conducted over the month of October 2016 and notes were taken and then transferred onto a prepared observation schedule (Appendix D).

Furthermore, informally, as before, I had conversations with the LRC members during break-times twice a week, as a way to discover their prior knowledge on leadership, in response to the fourth question of phase two. This approach influenced the participants' behaviour as they became familiar with me as a researcher (Rule & John, 2011). The conversations offered a voice to the voiceless. At the same time, I also cross-checked the data obtained with other sources, to strengthen their validity (Simons, 2009). I continued taking notes on their responses and transferred the information noted onto the observation schedule.

3.5.5 Change Laboratory workshops

Change Laboratory as a methodological tool in CHAT was used to engage participants in "meaningful, critical teaching and learning" (Mbelani, 2014, p. 7). According to Sannino, Engeström and Lemos (2016), expansive learning is creative learning where the subjects come together to create something new, which leads to a transformation of individuals or a collective activity. The transformation of my project and collection of data ended at stage three of the expansive learning cycle, due to time and the nature of the study.

I conducted two workshops in one week on two different days, with LRC members as participants at the one workshop and the other with teachers, HOD members and the school board chairperson. As mentioned earlier, a combined workshop with adults present, could have been inhibiting for the learners who were 12 to 13 years old at the time. A room was arranged where raw data generated from the LRC workshop, interviews, questionnaires, and observation notes were presented as instruments and mirrored to participants. Contradictions were then written on flip charts to trigger discussion and debate. These discussions were in line with developing Change Laboratories to enhance "dialogue, multiple perspectives and network of interacting" (Engeström, 2001, p. 135). Thereafter, problems, disturbances and

historical roots were traced to identify the source of the contradictions and to answer the research question on what can enable and constrain leadership development of learners on the LRC, using the steps of an expansive cycle above (*ibid.*). The process enabled the participants to focus transformational efforts on problems experienced (Engeström et al., n.d.). By this virtue solutions were modelled towards the object of learner leadership in the school.

3.5.5.1 Change Laboratory workshop 1

Twenty LRC members participated in the first workshop that was held after school with permission from their parents during the second phase of the study. The workshop in the second phase was held to model solutions to problems or contradictions that surfaced in the second phase, from the data. Therefore, before mirroring the data collected from the above-mentioned instruments, I offered a brief explanation on why the workshop was being conducted and a short explanation of CHAT using prepared flipcharts. Thereafter, analysed data from questionnaires and interviews were mirrored to the participants. Since this was a large group they were divided into five working groups to discuss and model new possible solutions to problems that surfaced. By the end of the workshop, new ideas that were modelled were grouped according to the relevant contradiction.

The intervention was video-recorded but the recording was not of good quality due to the inexperienced camera man. I planned to project the workshop, but I failed to get the correct cable that fits my laptop, so I used the flipcharts instead.

Figure 3.2 One of the working groups in the Change Laboratory workshop 1

3.5.5.2 Change Laboratory workshop 2

A total of 13 participants attended this workshop and these were: two HODs, one school board parent and 10 teachers. The same procedures were followed as in workshop 1; the unfortunate thing was that video recording did not take place due to a flat battery and the charger was locked in the principal's office. However, colleagues within the workshop took photos with their cell phones and that was useful for my study since the video capturing failed.

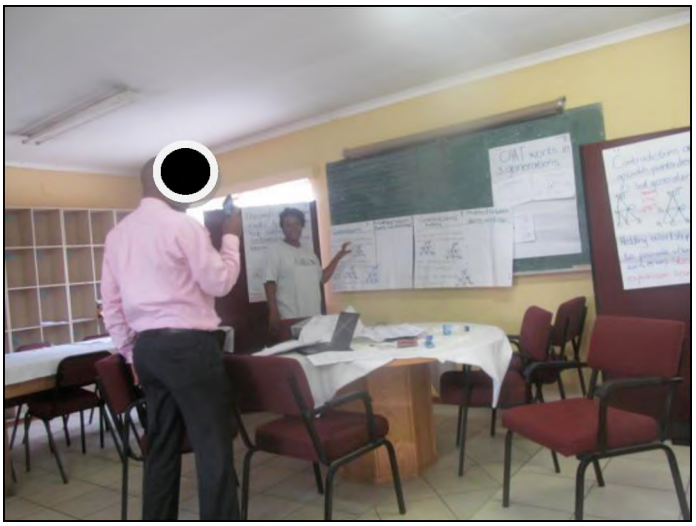

Figure 3.3 During Change Laboratory workshop 2

The reason for the two workshops with different participants is that a combined workshop – where learners and adults are present, may have been inhibiting for the learners, who were 12 and 13 years old. The second workshop comprised a different set of participants and again, teachers and the parent spoke more freely with learners absent.

Having discussed the data tools my attention now turns to how the data was analysed.

3.6 Data analysis

According to Rule and John (2011) data analysis is an intellectual process working with data "to find patterns of meaning" (p. 75). As for Simons (2009), data analysis enables you to organise and make sense of the data in order to produce findings and an overall understanding of the case. It is frequently a "formal inductive process of breaking down data

into segments or data sets which then can be categorised, ordered, and examined for connections, patterns and propositions that seek to explain the data" (*ibid.*, p. 117).

Collected data was analysed in such a way that it speaks and makes sense by using quotations from the participants' raw data. To unearth the contradictions and tensions from the raw data, I manually analysed the data collected guided by the second generation of CHAT, to see how the different elements interrelated (Engeström, 2001). As a result, using the second generation of CHAT as an analytical tool, enabled me to interpret the participants' views and actions on learner leadership development. In addition, working across all data sets I looked for ideas that belonged together to form themes, as answers to the research questions. Therefore, audio tape interviews were transcribed verbatim, collected data was categorised according to the research questions and coding was used with different colours as the coding process enables the researcher to quickly retrieve and collect all the text and other data (Maree, 2007). To retrieve themes and ideas quickly, the four research questions were labelled with different colours. I then coded the emerging ideas or themes according to each research question colour.

Figure 3.4 Coded emerging ideas

Furthermore, while working with the raw data, labels were given to the participants, for example: learner 1, teacher 3 or HOD 2. This was done to protect the anonymity of the participants, as most of them are young learners who are not able to defend their privacy and

moreover for protection of unfair judgement (Simons, 2009). The above issue will be discussed in more detail under ethical issues.

3.7 Ethical issues

According to Berg (2001), researchers need to ensure the rights and privacy of the people that their study is focusing on. Thus, "every code of ethics designed to guide research involving human subjects give primacy to the requirements of fully informed voluntary consent on the part of the individual concerned" (Gregory, 2003, p. 26). Consent is an agreement that must be finalised between the people taking part in the research and the researcher (Thomas, 2009) (Appendix E1).

The agreement ensures that ethical practices are followed in the research. According to Silverman (2000), information about the research should be given to participants to decide whether they want to participate. Furthermore, Lichtman (2014) notes that should any participants feel they want to withdraw from the study, they should not feel threatened or be penalised. Thus, a formal agreement was reached with the participants that clearly stated that they had full right to withdraw from the research if needed. Since learners are subjects that are not competent to agree as Silverman (2000) argues, permission was sought from their parents. An active consent was given – a formal written permission to allow the learners to be part of the research. The principal, as the gatekeeper, was fully informed about the research and a letter of permission was obtained from him (Appendix E2).

I had already introduced the nature of the research to the staff as standard procedure that I should maintain as a researcher, and this step was accomplished as in many ways this project was a continuation of the 2014 study. A letter of declaration was issued to all other participants who were not learners (Appendix E3) and both their identities and that of the school was kept confidential as pseudonyms, letters and numbers have been used in the study as identifiers. Assurance was given to the participants that information collected would only be used for the thesis and also might be used for future publication.

The section will look at my position as a researcher to avoid bias.

3.8 Validity and positionality

Simons (2009) argues that validity measures strengthen the value of one's findings. I have already referred to triangulation which became possible when I collected several data sources which I had drawn upon during the analysis. Simons (2009) argues further that cross-checking of significant issues and perspectives from different data strengthens evidence for claims. Thus, for ensuring validity I followed the following useful suggestion from Creswell (2014) of using rich and thick description to convey raw data. This was done to provide detailed descriptions of the project, for the results to become realistic and richer. Another suggestion I followed was that of spending more time in the field of research (Creswell, 2014). In this way, I developed an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, to convey credible details about the site and people.

Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2000) offer useful information to ensure validity. Following their advice, I tried to work with appropriate methodology to answer my research questions and select the right sample. And finally, I listened carefully and took notes during the interviews which helped me to transcribe effectively.

Most importantly, being an HOD at the school and having a relationship with some of the teachers and learners brought into question my positionality as a researcher. As an inside researcher I possessed deep insight and understanding of the people and place. While this can be an advantage, it also poses a validity threat, since I am in danger of assuming that I already know certain information. I needed to be vigilant of bias, so as not to complicate my ability to observe and interpret my data, as Chavez (2008) indicates. Similarly, to avoid more bias I limited my voice on any opinion about learner leadership, as I could have manipulated my participants to say more than they intended to say (Mercer, 2007). Furthermore, Buckle and Dwyer (2009) mention that role confusion can occur in any research study. As a result, I was aware of this while carrying out my other role as a Head of Department.

Participants were informed from the onset of the study that they should not feel pressured to take part in this study, to avoid skewed results. In addition, the participants were informed of their voluntary participation and I also asked permission to take photos of the participants. I believed that if the participants felt a sense of partnership in the study, positionality was less of an issue. Hence, if the partnership is strong, then participants "may be more willing to

share their experiences because there is an assumption of understanding and shared distinctiveness" (Buckle & Dwyer, 2009, p. 58). It was therefore important that I kept all participants fully informed every step of the way. Thus, my presence as an objective participant prevented me from leaning too heavily on pre-conceived perceptions.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explored the methodologies employed in the research that were able to answer my research questions. It described the research paradigm and approaches. The chapter looked at the research site and at how the participants were selected for the study. Furthermore, as different data tools were used, the chapter explored how and why the tools were chosen for the study and how the data were analysed.

Finally, a study, where people are participants, and its findings, will be considered invalid by those reading it, if ethical guidelines are not adhered to. The chapter concluded with a discussion on how these ethical issues were observed. Ensuring the validity of my work was also considered in this chapter and most importantly, my position in the study as an inside researcher was clarified. My attention turns to the presentation of data in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined how the data were collected. Thus, the focus of this chapter is to present "descriptive summaries of what participants have said" (Maree, 2007, p. 111). Data is comprised from interviews, questionnaires, observation, a focus group interview and the Change Laboratory workshops tools, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. The chapter will further investigate the research goals: firstly, regarding the learner leadership club of 2014, focusing on why it ultimately did not sustain itself. Secondly, drawing on lessons learned in the 2014 project, I plan to present views of the participants on the development of learner leadership in the current LRC of 2016. I decided to let the data speak, showing how the participants viewed leadership development at the school. For this purpose, validity measures will be adhered to whilst presenting the participants' responses.

Four research questions (presented in Chapter Three) were set to structure the study in two phases. However, through the process of categorising data, four categories emerged from the research questions. The following categories will be used to present the data in phases.

Phase One:

- The 2014 Learner leadership club project.

Phase Two:

- Perceptions of learner leadership explored;
- Leadership developments enhanced;
- Enabling and constraining factors for leadership development.

Keeping in mind the ethical issues from the previous chapter, pseudonyms will be used for participants as identification. Therefore, description of codes and profiles of the main participants will be discussed first, followed by the presentation on how the participants expressed their views.

4.2 Codes and participants' profiles

4.2.1. Coding

I used codes to present the main participants and data tools as follows:

Table 4.1 Codes for participants

Participants	**Codes used**
2016 Learners Representative Council members	LRC1-21
Guardian Teacher (who is also an HOD)	GT
2014 Learner leadership club members	L1- 11
Principal	P
Head of Department	HOD1-2
Teachers	T1-15

Table 4.2 Codes used for data tools

Data tools	**Codes**
Questionnaire	Q
Interview	I
Focus Group Interview	FGI
Observations	O

Next, I present profiles of the main participants.

4.2.2 Participant profiles

This section showcases the participants of the research, who they are and what roles they perform at the school. This is to help the reader to understand who the participants are. Thus, pseudonyms are used for the participants and the school name for ethical considerations. While teachers and learners were comprised of both genders, for the purpose of this study *all references to participants will be male.*

4.2.2.1 The LRC (LRC1-21)

A group of 22 LRC members participated in the research as the subjects and these were learners aged between 12 and 13 years. These learners were in Grade 6 and 7 respectively. They are elected every year onto the LRC and some are fortunate that they can serve in the council over a period of two years if re-elected in Grade 7. The same group of learners participated in the focus group interview as well. The majority of these LRC members started their Junior Primary schooling at MPS, thus they were familiar with the school leadership culture.

4.2.2.2 Guardian teacher (GT)

GT began his teaching career as an upper primary school teacher teaching English. Thereafter, he was promoted to a HOD position for languages at MPS in 2008. He teaches English to Grade 7 learners. He is the guardian teacher for the LRC at the school, a task that he carries out wholeheartedly. He also counsels and serves on disciplinary committees at the school. He is an energetic pastor and is in his early forties.

4.2.2.3 2014 learner leadership ex-club members (L1-11)

These members participated in the intervention; they were part of the learner leadership club in 2014 during my BEd Honours study, during the first phase of this study. They were learners from Grade 6 and 7 in that year. In the beginning of 2014, they had a meeting where they decided on what mattered most to them at the school. They wanted to create an intervention project, which they agreed would be the litter campaign.

4.2.2.4 Principal (P)

He joined Marula Primary School (MPS) in 2012 as the principal, coming from Aus community centre in the south of Namibia as a Head of Department (HOD) for 10 years. He is a qualified teacher, who holds a Further Diploma in Management and is qualified to teach social studies. He is an ambitious man in his early forties, who serves in different leadership positions outside the school context.

4.2.2.5 Head of Department (HOD1)

This HOD began her teaching career in 1986 at MPS; she was one of the first teachers and is the longest serving teacher currently at the school. She is in her early fifties and teaches mathematics to Grade 6 and 7. She is the HOD for mathematics and natural science at the

school. She is also the sports co-ordinator and stock control officer of the school. These roles she administers with passion.

4.2.2.6 Head of Department (HOD2)

This HOD is in her late fifties and is the HOD for junior primary Grade 0-1. She administers her duties with care because of her extensive experience in teaching the lower grades. She teaches Afrikaans to Grade 3.

4.2.2.7 Teachers (T1-15)

Ten teachers participating in the research are teachers who teach the LRC members. They are mostly involved with these learners on a day-to-day basis with extra-mural activities. The other five teachers do not teach these learners, but work with them as well in extra-mural activities and observe their leadership abilities around the school. All teachers are qualified and hold teaching diplomas or degrees.

I now present data collected during the two phases of my research. Starting with phase one, I will present the data gathered from the 2014 learner leadership club project.

4.3. Reflection on the 2014 learner leadership project

In 2014 during my BEd Honours study, the school allowed me to run an intervention at the school to study how a learner leadership club could contribute to the development of leadership in learners. Unfortunately, the club as an activity system did not sustain itself the following year despite several achievements. To probe the non-sustainability of the club, my first research question was: W*hat were the perceived causes of the non-sustainability of the learner leadership club at the school?* Data presented showed how the participants from the community and the subjects themselves felt about the club's achievements, even though challenges were experienced that led to its non-sustainability.

The club's achievements will be presented, followed by the challenges faced.

4.3.1 The club's achievements voiced

In the questionnaires, the participants felt that the good management of the club in 2014 contributed to its achievements as L9 expressed "it was managed very well and very

excitingly" (Q). Club members as part of the management, contributed to the excitement and willingness to be in the club according to L10 who strongly pointed out that "it was managed by us the leadership group" (Q). Moreover, L9 further expressed that because they had ownership of the club along with the good management, "things went accordingly in a way we expected it to go" (Q).

If there were problems or issues to work out, meetings were held. L2 explained "we had special meetings that made things work out and it was good" (Q). Furthermore, the guidance of the teacher during meetings, contributed to the unfolding of activities for the club and the commencement of the litter campaign. "We had a lot of activities" as L8(Q) pointed out. The one activity they had, was to start with an awareness of the litter campaign and to start keeping the school environment clean as part of the intervention. Similarly, the principal emphasised that the initial purpose of the club was to "raise awareness with regard to environmental cleanliness" (I).

The awareness of the project began with "putting up posters around the school environment" L8(Q) expressed, for other learners to see. To create more awareness, they had to "talk to the learners at the assembly", L2(Q) noted. Moreover, the process of creating awareness contributed to teamwork and co-operation as they had to share responsibilities. These views were confirmed by L7 and L11 who said, "learners last year were working together and used to co-operate" (Q). L6 emphasised this by saying "we all worked as a group and listened to each other" (Q).

The success of the distributed activities led to a successful litter campaign. L6 felt that "our cleaning campaign worked well, and all learners listened to us and prefects helped us well" (Q). Aid for this achievement did not only come from the learners, teachers too were involved as permission for the club's establishment was granted by the school management and teachers were fully informed. Resonating with this claim, the principal affirmed "that teachers were informed fully and bought into the idea of keeping the environment clean, thus they understood why they were engaging in the activity" (I). Surprisingly the achievement "did not end at school level but it went beyond the school level, so the programme definitely raised leadership amongst learners" (P, I). Other activity systems were established beyond the learner leadership club activity system.

The principal in his interview, went on to further explain the broader influence by saying:

> We have gone to the extent of learners formulating their own environmental clubs outside of the school programme; a Grade 6 learner established an environmental club which was recognised by the President of the Republic of Namibia. He was invited to the state house and this particular learner explained to the president why he had started his own environmental club and why he is doing it with his peers and I am talking about 16 learners from outside. Different schools were influenced by this learner of our school to start an environmental club and this club is currently enjoying much support from the non-governmental organisations.

Even though the club had the achievement of extending its leadership influence from 20 learners to a broader extent outside the school, several pitfalls were experienced during 2014 which perhaps led to its non-sustainability. This will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 The challenges experienced by the club

Although certain aspects of leadership were achieved, the club members had to go through rough patches during that year. L5 expressed the hardship they went through by saying, "people teased us; people called us cleaners and mocked us" (Q). Furthermore, the mocking increased and became a huge challenge when the club members went to pick up papers around the school as L1 said: "When we were picking up papers some people would make fun of us, like MPS cleaners pick up papers. You will pick up and you will still find papers there" (Q). This encounter led to learners not showing any respect towards the club members. "People did not want to respect us when we told them to pick up papers, they would not do it", L1(Q) further noted.

The disrespect from others pushed the club members to start losing interest and to not take the club seriously, "as many took the club as a joke" (L5,Q). Furthermore, when problems were raised, club members lacked the co-operation amongst themselves according to L2 and L9: "People were not co-operating with each other and even forgot that the leadership club existed" (Q). Due to the above, poor management of the club was experienced as "there was no one to maintain the club" (L5,Q). Hence meetings started waning.

According to L1, L2, L8 and L10(Q), "Some people did not attend the meetings that were made because they were busy with other things". Therefore, decisions to be taken and ideas generated during these poorly attended meetings failed, because they did not "listen to each

other and did not pay attention to the things we were supposed to do this year" (L9,Q). Thus, the prepared awareness posters ended up being vandalised as L5 clearly noted: "People tore up our posters that we made with hard work" (Q). All these unfortunate activities led to club members not caring anymore as "people did not even worry about it and stopped cleaning" (L6,Q). Additionally, L11 eagerly expressed how the club was affected by the behaviour of the members – "some just decided that no, I am not going today" (Q). Furthermore, this behaviour led to club members abandoning the club activities and joining other extra-curricular activities. "Some people did not come because they went to sport" L11(Q) noted.

Moreover, the abandonment was not only from the learners' side, but also the guardian teacher's presence at the club activities was missing. Therefore L5(Q) sadly noted that "there was no one to maintain the club and if teacher could be present at every meeting" perhaps things would not have fallen apart. The principal also noted the lack of teacher commitment towards the club as being a challenge at that time, as he said, "Motivational aspects are not in place and we need committed teachers who want to see change" (I).

Despite the lack of teachers' commitment, the principal noted that other "factors beyond our control" such as the "financial aspect of the programme" was also a challenge to the club's sustainability (I). Finances were needed to run the club and to purchase cleaning materials to be used by club members for effectiveness. The principal noted a few challenges linked to lack of finances: "You need rubbish bin plastics and hand gloves for every exercise" (I). Effective marketing of the club could not take place due to finances. L2 expressed that "the school did not even make t-shirts for the leadership members" (Q). This perhaps showed that club members felt they could have sustained the club, if others saw the existence of the club.

By reflecting on the 2014 project I was able to see how learners employed their leadership abilities and skills during the intervention. In conclusion of phase one, the participants shared the view that the 2014 club project had its achievements but in turn, heavy challenges were experienced that led to its non-sustainability at school. The consequence of the termination of the 2014 learner leadership club affected further leadership developments amongst the learners.

Now I move on to present findings that emerged in phase two.

4.4 Perceptions of learner leadership explored

Questionnaires were administered to participants to gather their views and perceptions on the notion of *how learner leadership is currently understood in the school, thereby* answering the second research question. Hence, being a new concept in this context, the participants answered the questions in the following order: first, by explaining and defining what leadership is and then by expressing their views on what learner leadership is. The information will be presented in that order.

4.4.1 Views on leadership are unpacked

The data showed that the participants had different views on leadership: they understood it as a person leading, who is influential and has vision and goals, is caring and that there are perceived qualities attached to leadership. Finally, leadership was understood as management.

T1 and LRC8(Q) began by noting that leadership is the way "a person leads and commands a group" or "a person who leads an organisation" as LRC2(Q) further noted. HOD1 viewed leadership as a way "to be in the fore front of a group" (Q). Additionally, leadership was viewed as how leaders "show great potential" (LRC6,Q) and with the "ability to inspire and influence others positively" (LRC3,Q). T1 and T5 further expressed that the ability of a leader is to "influence the group towards achievement of a specific set goal and for others to follow willingly" (Q). "Developing followers into potential leaders and to keep them on track" was how the guardian teacher (I) expressed his views on being a leader. In addition, others viewed leadership as being influential and leadership was also viewed as a practice with "leaders who are visionary" (FGI). The group went on to emphasise that this vision is only possible "if we have one team, one focus and one aim" (FGI) and leaders have the "ability to share vision which can be followed by a group" (HOD1,Q) or "letting your followers buy into it" (P, I). Moreover, sharing a vision will inspire leaders to "lead others in the right path" (LRC15,Q) and "help them to become better in life" (LRC18,Q).

Most of the participants felt that helping and making a better life for others was the responsibility of a leader. LRC1(Q) strongly expressed, "I am ready to take responsibility for my school" and LRC10 saw a true leader in himself and said, "I am a true and responsible

leader, I will make sure my people are in order and will try to solve their problems and also try to reach for my goals as a leader" (Q). These participants showed authentic leadership and "representing the interest of those you are leading" (T10,Q) is how they viewed leadership. Thus, in the FGI this was elaborated further:

> We should think and care for others, think of our colleagues, our fellow learners before we think of ourselves and only make decisions that we think are good for us, but we should also get other's opinions.

Moreover, they viewed leadership as dealing with and overcoming challenges. LRC10 pointed out "I am ready to face every problem and obstacle and every day with a smile" (Q), as a leader. Furthermore, T1 agreed as he said leadership is a practice that "teaches independence and confidence to tackle challenges in the future" (Q).

Different characteristics of leaders that learners may have was also linked to the practice of leadership. T12 began by noting that "they are courageous and know who they are or want to be in life" (Q). This view was backed up by LRC12(Q) who said, "they need to have a lot of courage and bravery as a leader" and LRC14 added "I am strong and consider myself a leader" (Q). Similarly, T1 and T15 noted that leaders have a "sense of pride and as a result they become in control and lead others and their self-esteem is boosted" (Q). Hence, with the above-mentioned characteristics, data showed that "learners demonstrate eagerness to lead" (T7,Q) and "they also enjoy leading others and practicing leadership" as T4(Q) noted.

Another point of view was that if you were a leader you had to be respectable and a good example. LRC4 presented himself as a leader by noting "I consider myself being a leader because I am exemplary in a good way and I can give the learners a good and inspiring future" (Q). In the same line LRC6 noted: "I always lead by example" (Q); furthermore LRC17 expressed the view that if you are a leader you have "to prove yourself as an exemplary person who will help others at all time" (Q). From the focus group interview, they held the view that they should "live by example and be a good example"; as it was further clarified: "I cannot come to school late and expect others to come early, so I learned to be punctual, exemplary and optimistic". Moreover, what the LRC presented was what the Guardian Teacher (I) confirmed:

> What we expect from these learners is that they should be true leaders and lead by example, when it also comes to respecting the norms, the rules of the school, also on an academic sphere, they should lead by example as leaders.

Being exemplary as leaders led to another aspect of leadership being brought forward – believing in themselves and "having great ideas" (LRC20,Q). Furthermore, LRC20 stressed this point by saying, "because I have leadership skills I can advise people and I am confident in myself" (Q). LRC11 and LRC16 noted, "I want to be a leader one day and control my own group and be the best or great leader one day" (Q). Furthermore, LRC9 would have the confidence to "control and tell people what to do and not to do" (Q). From the FGI they viewed being confident in this way:

> You must be confident it does not matter if you are short, tall, shy, rough or what, you need to be confident of yourself and you have to do what you are supposed to do, like being a leader, leading other learners into doing correct stuff.

Above all this it is a "confidence boost for some learners that enjoy their responsibility that goes along with the leadership" HOD1(Q) adds.

Lastly, leadership was viewed as management. For example, LRC2 viewed himself as a leader, "because I am passionate about organising, co-ordinating, delegating and motivating" (Q). Further, the term leadership was defined at the LRC training (O) and T13 expressed that "leadership is an act of guiding, leading, being responsible, and instructing others or followers" (Q). LRC22 added that it is a "person telling you do this or this" (Q). Finally, T5 concurred that "leaders can grow at any organisation and they should be given the space and resources to do so" (Q).

The term leadership was explored and defined with conflicting views held by the participants, leaving us with not one definition but with overlapping viewpoints. Hence, the concept learner leadership was understood as a leadership practice where young learners at a tender age are involved in maintaining order at school and being moulded as future leaders in the traditional way of leadership.

4.4.2 Understanding learner leadership at Marula PS

From the questionnaires given to the participants, LRC4, LRC11, LRC19 and HOD1(Q) defined learner leadership as "the state or position of a learner or someone leading others at

school" or "children in the process of being a good leader" (LRC16,Q). Furthermore, learner leadership was understood as a "group of selected learners in action to lead others or their peers in the right direction" according to LRC5, LRC21, T9 and T11(Q). In addition, T1 and T12 viewed learner leadership "as learners that take initiative to lead or direct as well as command his/her fellow learners" (Q).

Furthermore, learner leadership was understood from another viewpoint, according to LRC17 who pointed out that, "I think learner leadership means being a leader from a young age" (Q). LRC12 added that "learner leadership is a young leader that is brave and intelligent, who never takes wrong advice from people and never takes action without proper thinking" (Q). This view is in line with LRC2 who said that "it is an opportunity given to learners to allow them to discover and develop new skills of leadership and knowledge" (Q). T15 expressed that "learner leadership is when learners are given a task to lead others", hence, "moulding them from a young age to be responsible" (Q). Furthermore, T6 viewed learner leadership as "the ability a learner possesses in order to be in control over other learners" (Q).

Moreover, learner leadership was understood as "working together in a team to develop your school with your fellow leaders, working alone you will not achieve anything" (LRC1,Q). Furthermore, T10 and LRC13 expressed the view that "learner leadership is when minor responsibilities are shared or given to learners who are participating in a group that was chosen to lead" (Q). Therefore, learner leadership seemed to be understood as a group activity by the learners, and according to T8, "they are learners that are outspoken" (Q).

Another point of view on learner leadership, was that these learners were seen as being in charge and regulating order at school. On this aspect, T7 commented that these were "learners that are in charge of others normally to guide them on behalf of teachers" (Q). Similarly, HOD2 noted that they "take charge if teachers are busy and supervise during events" (Q). Learners themselves felt that being in a leadership position was all about maintaining order according to LRC7 who commented: "How I understand it is that you have to help the teachers and principal to discipline the school when they are not there" (Q). Additionally, LRC18 simply understood learner leadership as "leadership when someone is

chosen to help the teachers to maintain order!" (Q). In addition, SMT4 viewed learner leadership as "creating room for future leaders" (Q).

4.5 Leadership development of the LRC enhanced

The next question in phase two was: *How is leadership developed on the LRC?* Most participants held the view that leadership development at school was through different roles that the LRC were involved in and leadership training that the school has yearly as a tradition to support the LRC and to enable them to raise their voice according to the data gathered. First, I will present the leadership development activities and then move on to the support the school offers towards leadership development.

4.5.1 Practice roles to enhance leadership development of the LRC

During the interview with GT, he informed me on how the learners are involved in leadership by saying: "Every year we select or elect new learners for the role of prefects (LRC)". LRC7(Q) confirmed this by saying that "being selected to be LRC" is when their leadership development starts at school. Other learners who are not LRC also experienced leadership development at other levels according to the principal who noted other roles like "class captains, choir leaders, cultural group leaders, hostel prefects and environmental club leaders" (I). These non-LRC leadership roles are developed in such way that T14 commented: "Yes especially in my class, the class captain is the leader who really leads and controls the class very well and she is really enjoying being a leader" (Q). To add to that, LRC4 noted that learners are "involved in different types of clubs like English club and cultural groups" (Q). Hence by being involved in the academic clubs, they learn to develop their leadership abilities as they guide and help others who are not able to read or write English using participative approaches such as telling stories or games. In this way, they share different activities and ideas amongst themselves (O, 12th October 2016).

Besides the above leadership roles, learners are expected to incorporate policing as part of their role. "Monitoring behaviours of other learners, supervising other learners when teachers' are not around", T7(Q) expressed, is what is expected. Furthermore, T8(Q) added that "they try to maintain discipline in the classroom". Since the school's population size is large and it caters for primary learners, the LRC "maintain order at playgrounds" as well (T10,Q).

Moreover, learners "being in this policing role for them is a privilege" (T10,Q). As LRC6 commented: "I love being a prefect (LRC) because it gives me the privilege to help teachers when they are not here" (Q).

Participants also expressed the view that LRC members taking up these roles could be moulded to "become leaders one day" (HOD2,Q). Furthermore, T4 felt that "it is a good thing because it equips them taking up leadership roles" (Q). It was viewed as "an inspiration when young people are able to lead, as it encourages them to be role models to others and it motivates them to work hard" (T4(Q); T13(Q)). Developing leadership at this stage within the LRC was perceived as good and welcoming because they are leading their peers and "peers understand each other" claimed T9(Q). Further data showed the support the school gave to the LRC helped with the leadership development at the site.

4.5.2 Leadership development of learners supported by teachers

According to data gathered, the presence of teachers amongst the learners helped with leadership development. LRC7(Q) noted that the support and guidance they got from school "encourages them to be good and responsible leaders". Moreover, the leadership development was further enhanced as teachers were "interacting with the learner leaders from time to time for short intervals to constantly motivate them and listen to their problems" (T10(Q); GT(I)). The kind of interaction the school has with the LRC was elaborated on by T3 and T11(Q): "Yes, the school supports these learners by elaborating and educating them on the importance of leadership skills and what is expected from them as leaders at school". Interestingly, it was also noted in the data how teachers were trying to integrate their teaching to enhance leadership as T2(Q) noted: "Each teacher is providing or teaching in a learner-centred method which enhances leadership skills and knowledgeable activities".

The school supports leadership training by setting up leadership training for the LRC, as a means of developing their leadership. LRC4(Q) affirmed this when he said, "Our school supports learner leaders in a very good way because they even make time for us to go to workshops and we come together and discuss things as leaders".

In his interview, the guardian teacher (I), elaborated further on taking the LRC for training:

> Therefore, it is of outmost importance that we need to take them for training where they are refreshed on what leadership is all about, the training at least created platforms where the learners are informed on what their roles are.

Furthermore, data gathered revealed that several leadership opportunities were produced at the training which gave a "positive injection" (GT, I) into the leadership development of the LRC. GT continued by saying that training was a "good initiative from the school side for learners to be sharpened on leadership skills". In line with this development, the FGI posed views such as: "The training really equipped me as the head boy, learned how to act like LRC and we learned a lot of stuff". Furthermore, the training shaped these learners to deal with daily social challenges to develop them into bold and brave leaders (O, 14th April 2016).

Secondly, other developments observed at the training, was on voice. According to GT(I) the training enabled these LRC members to "interact, they felt free to take part in the training by virtue of asking questions, giving comments and everybody was at ease; if there was any clarity needed they felt free to ask their questions". In support of this view, I observed from the training how the facilitator was pin-pointing the issue of the LRC raising its voice on issues that concerned their community collectively. The facilitator made a remark that "a leader must be a good communicator!" (O, 14th April 2016).

Following this training, the confidence of the learners grew as can be noted from the following shared comment: "From the LRC training we are now confident and we can tell them, we can face them, and get them to do something that we tell them to do" (FGI). The general feeling garnered from the FGI was that the training taught them "how to talk and encourage other kids" and importantly the group expressed that they "learned how to communicate with learners".

Furthermore, the issue of raising their voice was encouraged when LRC meetings were held. The observation done at the training revealed guidelines given to the LRC on what to do during meetings, such as: prioritise issues of discussion, brainstorm, consult and come up with solutions (O, 14th April 2016). The external facilitator from NANSO went on to say, "meetings are there to discuss challenges, discuss real issues within your school" (O, 14th April 2016). All of the above was done in the name of developing the LRC members' leadership abilities and for them to be leaders who are able to take decisions. In conclusion,

from the training received, the LRC members were prepared to have effective meetings as they commented that, "we should be coming together and talking about what and how to change the school" (FGI).

For the leadership to be fully developed there were enabling factors attached to it and on the other hand constraining factors towards the leadership development which were visible in the school society. Therefore, in the next section I will present these factors looking at the fourth research question: *What enables and constrains leadership development of learners on the LRC?* First, I will present the enabling factors and then the constraining factors.

4.6 Enabling and constraining factors for leadership development

Enabling and constraining factors on learner leadership development were experienced during the duration of the study and they will be discussed briefly below.

4.6.1 Enabling factors for learner leadership

The positive environment that the LRC experienced is what perhaps enabled their leadership at school. Hence, because of the positive environment that enabled leadership development, T12 could say that "some learners enjoy doing this; they are excited and even take it seriously" (Q). According to T11, "I observed that the school prefects (LRC) are always delighted and happy to serve their fellow learners" (Q). HOD1 added that "they feel happy to be entrusted with the duty of leading others" (Q). In addition, "being recognised as a leader amongst peers which is a big step to them" (T15,Q) enabled these LRC members to take up their leadership roles and lead others.

Another enabling factor was the full attendance of the LRC at the training. The guardian teacher commented as follows: "So what I liked about this training is that all learners attended or let me say 95% were present" (I). The full attendance allowed the LRC to gain new knowledge or information that would help to develop their leadership abilities. The guardian teacher in his interview expressed:

> Yes, the learners were given new information, fresh information and the following day after they returned from the training one could really see the eagerness, the willingness of the learners. You could see them how they carried out their duties, the training inspired them.

Moreover, not only knowledge from the training enabled this LRC, but their prior knowledge also helped them to be effective leaders; as LRC12 noted "it is also in my blood to be a leader I take after my parents" (Q). Besides parental influence, other prior knowledge comes from media and their teachers, especially from the life skills teacher (O, 18th October 2016). In support, teachers present new knowledge and involve learners in their lessons to contribute to leadership development; T2(Q) illustrated that "they are always participating in lessons, divided into groups – each group leader is always reporting back to the class. This is capacity building". Indeed, leadership is enabled through the shared division of labour collectively.

With these few enabling factors will now turn the focus on factors that constrain the above leadership developments.

4.6.2 Constraining factors towards leadership development

Several constraints to leadership development were mentioned by the participants and they will now be presented.

To begin with, the selection process of the LRC is a hindering factor on its own; learners are not involved in the selection process. It is done by teachers who select from their own criteria. "The way the selection is conducted is not conducive to figure out the learners with leadership qualities", T6(Q) complained. This process limits the democracy amongst the learners according to LRC5(Q) who expressed that "learners do what they are told and do not do things on their own".

Another constraint was the training, the fact that the training only took place over one day and several activities were omitted. GT(I) elaborated:

> In the past we normally took the learners on training over a weekend outside Windhoek where we have more time on a Saturday and then we conclude on a Sunday. When you have the training outside then the learners do something practical where they do like team building activities; now this time around we could not include that part.

This one-day training was due to financial constraints. GT(I) stated that "there were certain factors which we took in mind like cost factors and that the training was conducted during the week".

The notion of teachers not supporting the LRC came up as another constraining factor for the leadership development at the school. GT(I) commented :

> As a focus teacher and teachers overseeing the LRC we do not really get so much time to get involved with them (LRC) and after the training many times we leave the learners on their own, which I see as a weakness.

Furthermore, T7(Q) added that, "learners demonstrate eagerness to lead, however due to lack of enforcement and guidance some learner leaders forsake their duties". Due to this lack of guidance LRC5 and LRC6 expressed their views: "Well this school does not support the leading learners at all, in fact it is the learners that support the school in all ways possible!" (Q). LRC12(Q) further expressed the following:

> Not so well, honestly not everyone cares whether or not we are leaders – some teachers will never help us. The support is not good as expected like for example, last week Tuesday I went to the principal with a report that 4A was making a noise, but the principal just shut the door in my face, see the school also does not take us seriously!

Perhaps neglecting these learners takes us to the next constraint – learners being ill-disciplined as T8 noted: "Most of the learners currently in the LRC themselves lack discipline. They are rude". "They do not show any good example, they only act when they are told to do so", T13(Q) added. At the FGI, the below was added:

> Some of the prefects (LRC), like I am talking from self-experience, talk in class with children that they are supposed to be leading and sometimes we do stuff that we do not expect other learners to do.

Hence, being friends with others in classes might be a possible challenge that hinders the leadership in school. T10 noted that "the biggest challenge that the learners face as a learner leader is being a good leader and at the same time being a good friend to those they are leading" (Q). Another constraint was a lack of initiative: "We were expected to come up with activities, fund raising activities that will be able to make the school successful but none of that was done" (FGI). From my observations I noted that meetings as another initiative never took place. During the FGI it was confirmed that, "for example we were called for a meeting and only a few people came, not even a number of 10 and we are like 40 something". From this observation, I gathered that team work was really lacking, as all did not pull in the same direction (O, 20th October 2016). Adding to this view, it was noted at the FGI that "prefects

(LRC) we are doing nothing, yes and we are not even doing teamwork". Lack of team work was further observed during break time, when boys failed to co-operate in carrying out their duties, compared to the girls and failed to attend meetings organised by the girls (O, 20th October 2016). I now conclude the chapter.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, a focus group interview and observations with different participants including the LRC. Four different sections were generated and presented to answer the research questions to the study. Now the next chapter will discuss the findings that emerged from this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four I presented data in response to my four research questions. In Chapter Five, I discuss my findings according to the following themes:

- Conflicting perceptions of learner leadership;
- The challenges that emerged from the learner leadership club;
- Learner participation enhances leadership development;
- Factors enhancing learner leadership development;
- Barriers to learner leadership development.

Thereafter, I discuss the contradictions surfaced from the data and the model solutions based on these themes:

- Contradictions surfaced within the activity system;
- Proposed solutions modelled by the research participants during the two Change Laboratory workshops.

The themes outlined above will be discussed with reference to relevant literature.

5.2 The challenges that emerged from the 2014 learner leadership club

The establishment of the learner leadership club was one of the requirements of the BEd Honours ELM elective during 2014. The initiative was to establish a school leadership club and pursue learner leadership development (Grant, 2015). The object of an activity is driven by the goals and motives of the activity system. Moreover, Engeström (2001) notes that the focus of the activity system is on individual and group actions in a collaborative nature (see Chapter Two). Hence, whilst the participants interacted collectively, contradictions or tensions emerged within the club as an activity system. One might understand contradictions as being problems, but they can also be understood as sources of change and development, discussed in Section 5.7 in detail. Apart from these challenges, the club also recorded some

achievements which suggested that the club could be beneficial if it was integrated into the formal school curriculum.

Data revealed that the club started off well and the members felt ownership of the club as pointed out in Chapter Four (see Section 4.3.1). According to Mitra and Gross (2009), allowing learners to be heard enables them to develop feelings of belonging and ownership of the school or club. Furthermore, successful meetings were held, and voices were raised on pressing issues and what was needed (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Strategies for improving the learning environment were also experienced (Flutter, 2006); learners took control over activities in a 'distributed' manner by sharing responsibilities (see Section 4.3.1). Muijis and Harris (2003) refer to social distribution of leadership as leadership which can be stretched over the members of a group which then injects a broader influence, as highlighted by the principal (see Section 4.3.1).

However, as Grant (2015) reports, the take-up of learner leadership clubs is problematic in the majority of schools where BEd Honours students established them. This was certainly true of my school, and the club was not integrated into the formal school curriculum. Such policy as exists for learner leadership – such as the Education Act 16 of 2001 – provides guidelines for LRC structures only (see Section 2.4.2.1). From my experience as a teacher for 16 years, learner leadership clubs have never been officially recognised, as is the case with sports clubs, cultural clubs and others. This is one reason why teachers lack commitment towards learner leadership (see Section 4.3.2). In essence, the object of the activity system was affected since the formal school curriculum did not integrate learner leadership clubs into their system.

Learners therefore felt that their hopes for being leaders were devalued by the curriculum (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Furthermore, data revealed that club members were seen as a joke. They were mocked, teased and called names as revealed in Chapter Four (see Section 4.3.2). For that reason, their opportunities to have a democratic voice in the educational process shrank (Mitra & Gross, 2009). In these circumstances, it is not surprising that members started dropping out of the club. The club's sense of respect and social care for the school started deteriorating as members stopped caring and even stopped attending meetings (see Section 4.3.2). All these challenges and tensions developed hostility amongst the club

members as they were "ignored and even denigrated by the school system" (Angus, 2006). Even so, with all these challenges and tensions that emerged during 2014, the club initiative was successful as its goal to raise awareness on litter was achieved; however, the club itself was not sustained into the 2015 academic year.

The non-sustainability of the club raised eyebrows and questions. Clearly there were several reasons why the club did not sustain itself. One, as discussed, was the fact that the formal school system did not support learner leadership. Another reason perhaps, was that it was a new concept introduced at the school and as I had to complete my Honours degree, I had to leave the club to run on its own.

5.3 Conflicting perceptions of learner leadership

Data presented in Chapter Four revealed that learner leadership was understood as management rather than leadership. Part of the reason was probably that the phenomenon of learner leadership was regarded as something novel and remains under-researched in an African context (Grant, 2015; Grant & Nekondo, 2016). According to Grant (2015) it is a new topic and not fully legislated in government documents as discussed in Section 5.3. Hence the picture of leadership that emerged from the data was, at times, varied and even conflicting.

Research participants understood the concept of learner leadership by defining it as young children placed in leadership positions to lead others (see Section 4.4.1). Moreover, T15 (see Section 4.4.2) noted that placing learners in leadership positions at a young age could mould them into responsible leaders. This finds support in the belief that states, "all can lead and must lead" (Williams, 2011, p. 192), but the picture of leadership envisaged is one that sees a single person (the leader) in charge of others. This resonates with traditional leadership thinking as discussed in Chapter Two. LRC10 (see Section 4.4.1) revealed that for him to be a successful leader certain personality traits were needed to suit his leadership. This view portrays trait thinking, that successful leaders' personalities should be examined before taking up a formal position (Horner, 1997).

Data revealed that leadership was associated with possessing certain characteristics, such as being courageous, brave, strong and confident (see Section 4.4.1). This is in line with trait theory, as discussed by Coleman (2005). These traits were also seen to differentiate leaders from non-leaders (Rajan, 2009). One of the learners – LRC14 – pointed out: "I am strong, I consider myself a leader" (see Section 4.4.1). Here the learner is differentiating himself from others as a leader because of possessing specific traits.

In a similar vein, learner leadership is also perceived as management rather than leadership. The confusion of these concepts is often discussed by scholars, as shown in Chapter Two. It might be that the participants confused the concepts, or regarded them as the same thing. Bush (2007) points out that while managing you may also exhibit leadership skills, so it would not be surprising to find this confusion among non-scholars in the field. Data revealed that certain behaviours that the LRC members exhibited were 'management' behaviours. For instance, they wanted things to be done or accomplished by instructing others (see Section 4.4.1). Here they occupied a supervisory role. This resonates with Lunenburg's (2011) perception of management as the act of carrying out responsibilities and exercising authority.

But beyond the managerial role, data further characterised leadership as influential and inspiring. Further, T1 and T5 felt that leadership should influence groups towards set goals (see Section 4.4.1). This would align with the notion of group activities envisaged in CHAT, which posits that leadership will be influenced through collective activities that are conducted towards a common object (Mukute, 2010). This is the contemporary notion of leadership; Christie (2010) for example, argues that leadership is a relationship of influence towards a goal or outcome. Moreover, data gathered from the FGI showed that it is an influence exerted in a social context, so that it is a process rather than a trait or characteristic (see Section 4.4.1). Naidu et al. (2008) make the point that leadership in the context of social relationships is more likely to produce visions based on shared values. In this study, the activity of the LRC presented learner leadership as leadership that resided in a group (Williams, 2011). The actions conducted by the LRC group were to be undertaken by the community collectively, in an activity. Thus, it was a social phenomenon of working in groups and sharing minor responsibilities (see Section 4.4.2). Furthermore, it is assumed that the community will help to achieve the system's outcome through the division of labour. Spillane et al. (2001 as cited in Harris, 2004) refer to this as collaboration, and it lies at the core of distributed leadership.

As a result, young leaders working in groups collaboratively become attached to their school and start seeing the need to maintain order and discipline at school, as highlighted by LRC7, LRC18 and HOD2 (see Section 4.4.2). Flutter (2006) argues that students' attachment to the school – through undertaking collaborative tasks – benefits schools.

This selfless form of leadership – labelled in a variety of ways, such as transformational and servant leadership – was revealed in the focus group (FG1):

> We should think and care for others, think of our colleagues, our fellow learners before we think of ourselves and not only make decisions that we think are good for us, but we should also get others' opinions.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, leadership is understood in a range of ways by the respondents in this study. Some of the interpretations are probably the result of socialisation and cultural norms. The view that dominates is a narrow one, however, one which sides with traditional theory and managerialism.

I now move on to my third question, how leadership is being developed.

5.4 Learner participation in leadership activities enhances leadership developments

Data revealed that learners' participating in leadership roles developed their leadership skills. Furthermore, through active participation learners were inspired to be in leadership positions. Subbiah (2004, p. 86) argues strongly for the need for learner participation:

> Thus, learners' involvement in education is a non-negotiable issue. It is compulsory for all schools to have proper structures in place to allow for learner involvement in managing schools.

Thus, data showed that every year learners are selected to take up leadership roles (see Section 4.4.2), which is my next focus.

5.4.1 Forms of leadership roles

According to Osberg, Pope and Galloway (2006), students' involvement in active roles determines their learning environment. I found that the case study school engaged learners in

active roles that helped to enhance their leadership development. Data revealed that the case study school allocated different divisions of labour roles such as class captain, choir leader, cultural group leader, hostel prefect, academic club, environmental club and the LRC (see Section 4.5.1) This is in line with distributed leadership which advocates the involvement of many people in leadership activities (Harris, 2004). Moreover, learners being in these roles are empowered and developed and they enjoy their leadership roles, as noted by T14 (see Section 4.5.1).

Flutter (2006) posits that leadership roles practiced through active participation and collaboration also develop new skills and ideas. My observation revealed that the participatory approach that the learner leaders used, helped to guide and develop other learners to take up active leadership roles at the school. Mitra and Gross (2009) argue that youth attachment to schools benefits the schools.

Besides the above-mentioned leadership roles, learner leaders are also involved in roles of 'policing' or maintaining discipline. This aligns with the managerial view of leadership discussed in Section 5.3. While a policing role may seem a narrow view of leadership, Thomson and Gunter (2006) argue that this kind of participation involves leaders in decision-making about their classes or the school as a whole. Data also revealed that learners are placed in these policing roles because there are large numbers of learners at the school and teachers find it difficult to manage them on their own. Perhaps using learners' voice as a tool, might result in the school achieving its common goal since it helps to create an ordered, disciplined school environment. It is for that reason that T7 felt that LRC members could monitor and supervise other learners when teachers were not around as one of their roles (see Section 4.5.1). However, this view resonates with outdated views of leadership, such as trait thinking, as LRC members are labelled as strong leaders who can maintain discipline, because of their identified personalities (Kings, 1990).

To sum up, learner leadership roles at the case study school were not allocated as per the Education Act of 2001 (p. 18), whereby office bearers are supposed to be elected into different roles. This was evident from the data as no one mentioned roles such as secretary or treasurer in the LRC structure. Perhaps this is because there are no proper references or explanations of roles and functions of the LRC, noted by the Education Act (Uushona, 2012).

It might also be because the study was conducted at a primary school, and the Education Act does not stipulate anything on primary school LRC structures. Thus, the case study school created its own interpretation, suggesting roles that became the culture of the school to develop leadership within the LRC.

Although a more traditional type of leadership is evident at the school, data showed that opportunities for leadership development also existed.

5.4.2 Relations between the subjects and community unlocks leadership potential

Data revealed that leadership support was given to the LRC to unleash their leadership potential as pointed out in Chapter Four. The initiative of supporting the LRC promotes leadership development within a school (Grant, 2015). Furthermore, the initiative to support the LRC was observed in how the teachers interacted with the learners from time to time (see Section 4.6.1). An interaction of such a nature influences learners' leadership skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the interactions allow learners to express themselves freely within the activity system they operate in. This suggests level two of the pyramid of learner voice by Mitra and Gross (2009).

According to Mitra and Gross (2009), level two of the pyramid is where learners work with adults (teachers) to bring about changes in the school. Data revealed that learners did in fact collaborate with teachers and were supported in their leadership practice. Furthermore, data revealed that the support teachers listened to the learners' problems. As a result, learner leadership had the potential to develop. Moreover, the collaboration contributed to developing the social context of leadership, as teachers and learners worked collectively (Timperley, 2007). In relation to CHAT, the teacher community interacted with the subjects to aim for the object, which was leadership development.

Furthermore, leadership development was likely to be experienced at the school as teachers were reported to be engaging in teaching methods that supported learners to gain more leadership skills (see Section 4.6.2). Whilst teaching methods supported learners' learning, at the same time learners' academic achievements helped to improve the school performance and environment (Uushona, 2012). Thus, the process supported learners to acquire leadership abilities as they participated in the planning of classroom activities (Leren, 2006).

Apart from leadership development in classrooms, LRC members were taken out to leadership training to support, shape and mould them into leaders. One of the LRC members confirmed that the school allocated time to arrange workshops or training for them (see Section 4.5.2). This suggested that the school believed that learners were not born with leadership qualities, but needed training and development (Coleman, 2005). In line with the same view, the guardian teacher elaborated on the importance of LRC training at school, as he felt it refreshed what was learned at the leadership camp (see Section 4.5.2).

Data also revealed how training injected positive leadership development among the LRC. Positive views were expressed – and as learners grew in confidence they showed signs of authentic leadership (see Section 4.5.2). Observation revealed that the LRC members were ready to deal with daily social challenges as equipped leaders. Whitehead (2009) referred to this element as constructing social values. Moreover, the training provided socially just and democratic opportunities for the learners (Shield, 2004 as cited in Grant, 2015).

Democratic opportunities were perceived during the training, as the LRC developed an important aspect of learner voice. In other words, the training gave voice to the voiceless (Mabovula, 2009). As a result, LRC members were able to raise questions and comments on important issues concerning their social context. To that end, the external training facilitator from NANSO pointed out that the LRC should be encouraged and supported to start raising their voice on issues that concerned their community collectively (see Section 4.5.2). Smyth (2006) urges that they should start speaking out on what they regard as important and valuable. Furthermore, learners' raising their voice develops their confidence. Swaffield and MacBeath (2013) posit that as we learn "we become more confident in sharing with and leading others" (p. 10). Data revealed that the training developed the LRC members' communication skills to enhance leadership development. Language was used as a mediating artefact to develop leadership at the case study school. The training process developed the LRC members' consciousness of their leadership, as they started to understand the social relations in which they exist (Wertsch, 1991). Hence, the training prepared the LRC to become contributing citizens (Mitra & Gross, 2009).

Since the training was used as a developing tool to develop leadership on the LRC, it was observed how the LRC members were given hints to run successful meetings, such as: how to prioritise issues and coming up with solutions (see Section 4.5.2). The aspect of informing LRC members about meetings was in the name of developing leadership abilities and enabling them to make productive decisions for their school. According to Elmore (2000) and Lashway (2003) (as cited in Mitra, 2006, p. 315) being involved in decision making will further develop the concept of distributed leadership, by sharing the different division of labour to come up with collective decisions.

In brief, teachers collaborating with the learner leaders, contributed to massive leadership developments. The collaboration enhanced learner voice within the LRC. Moreover, the interaction of teachers and learners during teaching further exposed leadership skills within the learners. Data revealed training to be the main support for the LRC and the "best means for organisational empowerment" (Uushona, 2012, p. 33). Thus, it prepared learners to understand their social context and to further face daily social challenges.

Several enabling factors towards leadership development were revealed by the data in answer to the first part of the fourth research question.

5.5 Factors enhancing learner leadership development

Having discussed the support mechanisms in the previous section, I observed that the school also contributed in the struggle to develop leadership within the LRC. Four major contributing factors helped me as a researcher to understand how leadership was further developed on the LRC at the case study school. This is what I turn to next.

5.5.1 The four major enhancing factors

Section 5.4.2 revealed how teachers interacted with learners to promote leadership at the case study school. Such interactions contributed to a positive environment as the first enhancing factor. Flutter (2001) says that the "school environment can have a significant influence on students' attitudes" (p. 183). Furthermore, the positive environment enhanced learners' performance as teachers started entrusting them with leadership roles and leading others (see Section 4.4.2).

Secondly, the full attendance of the LRC at the training camp emerged as the next enabling factor. One could argue that perhaps the positive environment the school enjoyed contributed to the full attendance. This no doubt contributed to team spirit.

Thirdly, the LRC not only gained new knowledge from the training, but prior knowledge that learners possessed surfaced as another set of enabling factors from the data. Data revealed that before the training, learners had prior knowledge of leadership from their teachers. In this working environment, teachers presented new knowledge on leadership development during their lesson deliveries. T2 illustrated how group work was encouraged in classrooms; through group work learners were encouraged to be group leaders in reporting back on their activities. The process enabled leadership through the shared division of labour (see Section 4.6.1). Moreover, distributed leadership was practiced as an expansion of leadership tasks and responsibilities that occurred (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Finally, the findings further revealed that parents played a role in helping to mould learners into leaders as the fourth enabling factor. This emerged from the data as LRC12 pointed out that it was in his blood to be a leader as he got it from his parents (see Section 4.6.1). Fan and Chen (2001) posit that parental involvement has a positive influence on learners as well. Clearly LRC12 was referring to his parents' leadership through role modeling.

A number of constraining factors also emerged, and I discuss these next to answer the second part of the fourth research question.

5.6 Barriers to learner leadership development

Even though the end goal of the school was to develop learner leadership, several barriers emerged from the data.

5.6.1 LRC selection criteria

Data revealed irregularities experienced during the LRC selection process at the school. To begin with, the selection process is run by individual class teachers who select learner leaders according to their own criteria. Looking back on my schooling years, I clearly remember how

learners voted for their leaders on ballot papers, which was not the case at Marula PS. There was also no mention of an election committee as required by the Education Act 16 of 2001 (p. 18) which stipulates that:

> The principal must appoint an election committee that consists of four members, a senior teacher as chairperson and another teacher, both nominated by the teaching staff, and two learners nominated by the learners.

Rather than administer the regulations of the Education Act, teachers identified specific traits that they assumed learners needed to possess, thereby imposing outdated leadership thinking onto this school process. This problem was evident in comments referring to learner leaders being elected with the "right leadership qualities", as T6 put it (see Section 4.6.2).

Furthermore, the process limited democracy amongst learners, as they were merely informed who the next LRC members of the school would be. One of the current LRC members expressed disappointment in the process and said, "We do not do things on our own" (see Section 4.6.2). Subbiah (2004) stresses that the process of selecting learners into leadership positions is important and should be based on democratic principles. Furthermore, the effort of enhancing social justice was limited at the case study school, in the sense that teachers spoke too readily on behalf of the learners (Fielding, 2001). Hence, if the school continues to impose its notion of leadership onto the learners, effective leadership development will be hindered. The idea of leadership being the property of many, if not all, members, and being a process is entirely lost.

Financial management was also revealed in the data to be a hindering factor towards learner leadership at the school, which will be my next discussion.

5.6.2 Financial constrains

The imposition of 'free' education – in line with Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution (Namibia. Ministry of Education, [MoE], 2011) – has made financial management a headache at Namibian schools. According to this Article, parents need no longer contribute to the school development fund and the state takes full responsibility for financing government schools, allocating funds according to the number of learners at a school. In the past N$ 250 per child was required by parents to pay for primary schooling (Namibia. Ministry of

Education and Culture [MEC], 2001). The loss of this regular cash income has hit schools hard.

Speaking as a school manager, working out a budget on limited money is stressful. Priority items such as textbooks and stationery get the lion's share of the budget, and activities such as teacher and learner training, not stipulated in the Act, suffer. In addition, schools which do offer leadership training to LRCs have to limit the programme to one day, due to cost-cutting. In the case of the school under study, the LRC training took place on one day, 14 April 2016.

During the training I could see that the facilitator had much to offer but one cannot achieve much in a day. The guardian teacher (see Section 4.6.2) alluded to the same sentiment saying: "More could have been done such as some practical activities and team building activities if we had more time". Furthermore, the learners also felt disappointed that they were denied activities such as a drama on leadership, due to lack of time (FGI).

In this case financial implications hampered leadership development at the school. For effective leadership development, training should be held three times a year to allow for revision. There is support for the notion of on-going, recurring leadership training. Heystek (2001 as cited in Subbiah, 2004, p. 101) for example, suggests that training of learners should not be seen as a single event that happens in the year in which the LRC are serving.

Teachers not supporting the LRC also surfaced as a constraint at the case study school.

5.6.3 Teachers' lack of commitment

Poor support of learner leadership from teachers at Marula PS was experienced during the learner leadership club intervention of 2014, as discussed in Section 5.2. The lack of support was one of the challenges that led to the club's non-sustainability revealed by L5 in Chapter Four. Sadly, a leadership club member expressed his sadness at the focus teacher's poor commitment saying, "If the teacher could be present or available then things would not fall apart" (see Section 4.3.2).

The current LRC had experienced the same challenges of lack of support from the teachers. Data revealed that learners demonstrated eagerness to lead after the leadership training, but their expectations were in vain. This forced the LRC to express their disappointment saying

that the school did not support learner leaders effectively (see Section 4.6.2), even though Section 5.4.2 revealed how the school tried to support learner leadership.
Furthermore, lack of knowledge and leadership skill support from teachers, led to learners neglecting their duties (see Section 4.6.2). According to Smyth (2006), learners develop hostility towards schools because their experiences are ignored. LRC12 (see Section 4.6.2) explained how the school management ignored them.

Data revealed that the principal ignored reports from the LRC on what they had done regarding their duties. The LRC further narrated that the principal slammed his door in their faces reinforcing for the LRC, that they were not being taken seriously by the school authorities. Reactions like these, discourage the serious involvement of the LRC (Smyth, 2006). As a result, the lack of support contributed to tensions and contradictions between the subjects and the teacher community, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

In her own study of learner leadership, Mabovula (2009) argues that, for the sake of democracy, differences should be confronted and talked through, not be ignored as the principal in this study did. In addition, the principal left the LRC with feelings that "not everyone cares whether or not they are leaders" (see Section 4.6.2).

Furthermore, the non-availability of teachers to support the LRC was another constraining factor on leadership development. The guardian teacher revealed that they (the teachers) did not get time to be involved with the LRC (see Section 4.6.2). In most cases, the LRC were left on their own which showed a weakness on the part of the teachers, he further revealed. This also contributed to demotivating learner leadership development (see Section 4.5.2). Hence, we should bear in mind that such motivation from teachers is important "to shape, mould and contribute towards the future of our future leaders" (Nicodemus, 2013, p. 216).

The neglect of learner leadership development can also work against social justice in organisations. It is not possible for power to be shared in these circumstances and adults and teachers will simply continue to exercise total authority. Since these learners have to respect their elders they would not easily ask them for help (see Section 2.4.1). Hence, distributed leadership remains unattainable.

I am also not aware of a job description for teachers to oversee the LRC. Schools nominate LRC guardian teachers and may or may not provide them with training. This is maybe why non-LRC guardian teachers neglect their duties and fail to share leadership skills with the learners. Once again, the absence of policy works against learner leadership and teachers are reluctant to create time for the LRC (Smyth, 2006). Hence, teachers dedicate their time to other commitments that they are assigned to, such as teaching and learning, which are spelt out in the National Standard and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia.

Even though the school acknowledges and supports learner leadership as discussed in Section 5.4, clearly more needs to be done to have quality leadership within the LRC. Teachers as educators need to raise their level of commitment towards the upliftment of the Namibian child with regards to leadership. If teachers were committed at Marula PS – learner leadership would be taken more seriously.

5.6.4 The ill-discipline of the LRC

Having LRC members who are ill-disciplined also creates challenges for leadership development. According to Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008), the LRC should be involved in school governance to maintain discipline. This begs the question: If discipline is a problem among the LRC at Marula PS, how would they maintain order and lead others? Furthermore, they are not likely to be a good example to others as noted by T13 (see Section 4.6.2). Moreover, what Shekupakela- Nelulu (2008) suggests might not be realised.

Having exemplary LRC members might be more challenging since they were left on their own without a teacher's guidance and example to model leadership on, as discussed in the previous section. This might contribute to ill-discipline amongst the LRC. Furthermore, data does not reveal any internal policy guiding the LRC on how to act or behave as leaders. Moreover, as a teacher at the case study school, I have not come across documents or internal policies stipulating allocation of duties of the LRC or any regulatory act on the LRC. The only regulation is from the Education Act 16 of 2001, sub-section 3, on the suspension of the LRC office when found guilty of misbehaving, but it does not give much clarity.

On this note, I argue that the absence of policy might be a contributing factor to LRC ill-discipline at the school, since LRC members do not have clear guidelines on what to do or

how to conduct themselves. I further concur with Shekupakela- Nelulu (2008) who cautions that the absence of concrete policies on learners in school governance is a serious weakness. Furthermore, ill-disciplined LRC members will likely abandon their leadership activities and the school. At the same time, ill-discipline might result in the poor participation of the LRC in leadership activities. Hence, it will be a challenge to develop new skills and ideas within the LRC through a participatory approach (Flutter, 2006). This is disappointing, as student participation attracts youth to schools (Mitra &Gross, 2009).

School authorities might not be inclined to delegate or distribute tasks to "rude LRC" members (see Section 4.6.2). As a result, collaborative teamwork might be hindered since the school authority will hold on to power (Harris, 2004). Hence, the activity system will be fraught with tensions and secondary contradictions within the elements, that will be discussed later in this chapter (Daniels, 2008).

LRCs members' ill- discipline can be an obstacle to democracy, in the sense that the LRC might not be included in decision making at the school. Rather, they would be told what to do, as T13 revealed (see Section 4.6.2). Furthermore, the absence of the LRC in decision-making would hinder learner leadership development at the school. This will result in the LRC's failure to be contributing citizens in their communities freely (Starratt, 2007). On the other hand, exercising democracy publicly is a sign of developing learner voice within an institution. If democracy is hindered, then learner voice will not be heard.

Similarly, data revealed how the focus group participants expressed their view on distracting behaviours within themselves. With these distracting behaviours, the LRC would not be able to raise their voice to bring changes in the school. Moreover, their peers would not be able to listen to them since their level of discipline is the same. Hence, shaping their lives and that of their peers would be a challenge.

Data also revealed that the LRC as leaders could not come up with initiatives that could have enhanced their leadership further. This will be explored in the next discussion.

5.6.5 Lack of leadership initiatives

According to Flutter (2006), through imaginative ideas the school environment can be improved or transformed. However, data revealed that the LRC at Marula PS failed to come up with initiatives that could enhance their leadership and the school environment after the leadership training. This was confirmed by the FGI (see Section 4.6.2): they were expected to come up with activities that would benefit the school, but they failed to do so. One could argue that perhaps the one-day training that the LRC received, did not prepare them to work beyond the obvious levels of involvement.

Learner leadership develops from initiatives such as fundraising which could have added value to the already struggling finances of the school discussed in Section 5.6.2. Furthermore, pursuing initiatives in fundraising activities could have demonstrated commitment and motivation as signs of strong leadership (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes & Norris, 2000).

On another note, the LRC's failure to take up initiatives, could have affected their collaboration and social bonds within the structure that contemporary leadership envisages. As a result, the need for distributed leadership in the school would be less developed since teamwork was missing within the LRC (see Section 4.6.2). Lack of teamwork and initiative might result in poor distribution of labour at the school. The effect will be the opposite of distributed leadership, which is described by Muijis and Harris (2003, p. 440) as:

> A social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders.

Poor social distribution of leadership was further observed during break time at Marula PS. Observation revealed that some LRC members failed to take the initiative and commit to carrying out their duties (see Section 4.6.2). Surely, lacking in such initiative affects sharing of roles and functions in a collective social context (Timperley, 2007). Moreover, this would further constrain learner leadership development at the school.

The LRC also lacked initiative when it came to setting up meetings. During the observation conducted, meetings were announced but very few attended. As a result, the meetings ended up being cancelled and another opportunity for leadership development failed. Effective

communication could have been an opportunity for leadership development at Marula PS, but lack of pursuing meetings became a constraining factor. Meetings can be great platforms for collective understanding for a common purpose (Leithwood, 2001 as cited in Barnett et al., 2000). Furthermore, at meetings, decisions can be taken on focused problems whilst building strong relationships with others (Barnett et al., 2000). Moreover, this is a platform that can develop learner voice within the LRC.

It is clear from the above, that the school tries to support learner leadership activities, but that not enough is done. I now look at challenges through the lens of CHAT, which will help to identify the underlying conflicts and reasons.

5.7 Using CHAT – surfacing contradictions within the activity system

The study is framed by CHAT as an analytical tool whose role is to expose internal contradictions and unresolved tensions within an activity system (Sannino, 2008). Engeström (2001) argues that contradictions are not problems but rather sources of change and development within an activity system. The contradictions identified in the study will be grouped and discussed at two levels to further answer the second part of the fourth research question. These are *the primary contradictions* which occurred within each element of the activity system and *secondary contradictions* that were found between two elements of an activity system of my study. Diagrams will be used to illustrate each contradiction.

5.7.1 Primary contradictions within the subject

Two primary contradictions within the members of 2014 club and the 2016 LRC (subjects) were identified through questionnaires, observation and a focus group interview. These serve as constraining factors in learner leadership development.

2014 club members / 2016 LRC members

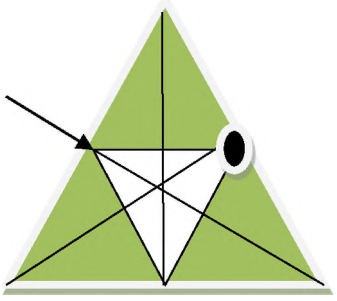

Figure 5.1 Primary contradictions

Data showed that there was no team work among the subjects pointing to a primary contradiction within an element of the central activity system (Daniel, 2008). On this tension an LRC member responded, "I learned that I should have come up with stuff to help the school but since I did not work with my team mate I did not do anything" (FGI). It is clear that the LRC members found it hard to work together judging by the observation I conducted. I observed that the boys were playing soccer instead of carrying out their duties. This resonates with the view of Lumby (2013) that when functioning within a group, one becomes comfortable and chooses to neglect one's distributed roles. More importantly, this points to a weakness in distributed leadership theory which assumes that, once roles are allocated, everyone will be ready and willing to do their part, without supervision.

Neglecting duties is only one of the consequences of this contradiction. More seriously, LRC members were seen to be misbehaving according to T8 (see Section 4.6.2). Hence, this contradiction is linked to another primary contradiction. According to Christie (2010), leaders are understood to be influential and directing others towards goals. Now with the above tension realised, the LRC seemed to be working against Christie's (2010) view. Hence, the tension revealed how the LRC would have found it difficult to be seen as authentic leaders: even their peers would not listen to them, or follow them. Learner leadership fails, as the influence of a socially unacceptable relationship is felt throughout the system.

The failure to promote healthy social relations also influenced the LRC as a body; when meetings were called, some refused to attend, the focus group interview revealed. This pointed to the same contradiction identified within the 2014 project, of people not attending meetings (see Section 4.6.2). These contradictions hindered leadership development at the school as learner leaders could not come together to make decisions for the betterment of the school. Hence the collaboration and collective activities that characterise the contemporary view and practice of leadership, would have been hard to achieve.

I now turn to secondary contradictions.

5.7.2 Secondary contradictions between the elements

Secondary contradictions were identified between the different elements of the activity system and they will be discussed as follows using different diagrams.

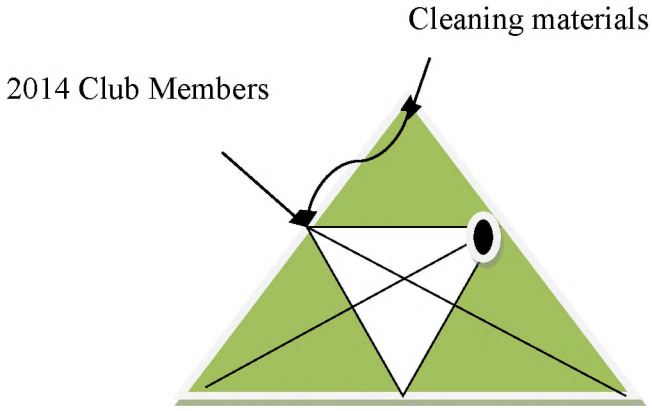

Figure 5.2 Secondary contradictions – lack of cleaning materials

Tensions occurred in 2014 during phase one of the study. Data revealed contradictions between the club members (subjects) and lack of cleaning materials (tools) as a hindrance to the club's performance, since the club engaged in a litter project in 2014 as mentioned in Chapter One. The principal indicated from the interview that the club's sustainability was "caused by factors beyond our control" which are "financial aspects" (see Section 4.6.2). From the discussion in Section 5.6.2, financial constraints were shown to affect training at the school; but now, even the normal functioning was shown to be suffering. Moreover, it was a challenge to finance the club since it was not stipulated in any government policy as discussed in Section 5.2. Furthermore, the secondary contradictions affected the club's functioning, as noted by the principal (see Section 4.3.2). Due to these circumstances, the club members could not continue with the club activities and thus the club could not sustain itself. This contradiction again points to the weakness of policies that are silent on issues of learner leading, as discussed by Grant and Nekondo (2016).

Another secondary contradiction surfaced between the subjects and the mediating tools.

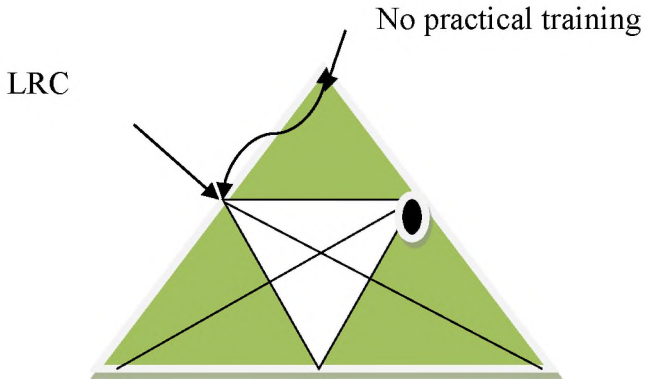

Figure 5.3 Secondary contradiction – no practical training

The effect of under-budgeting at the school contributed to hiccups during the LRC training, thus tensions and contradictions surfaced. The participants held views that the way the 2016 LRC training took place was too formal: practical activities (tools) were omitted that could have developed "team building" within the LRC (subject) structure, as the guardian teacher mentioned in the interview. Moreover, practical activities could have been potential mediating tools for learner leadership development within the LRC.

On this note one might say that the contradictions surfaced were due to finances, since the training could not be sustained for practical activities to take place (see Section 4.3.2). This left the LRC in a disillusioned state; they all expressed the same disappointment at the omission of practical activities. The LRC felt that something such as a drama on how to communicate could have helped them with their speaking skills in their leadership roles (FGI). Having the communication skills could have given the LRC a stronger presence before their peers (Mabovula, 2009). Even though finances could have been the key source of tensions, I would also like to highlight that the preparations of the training could have been the contributing factor to this contradiction. To my knowledge, as a teacher at the case study school, the nominated guidance teacher has not attended any training on how to oversee a LRC. Thus, he might not have the knowledge on how to plan for effective leadership training.

Another set of contradictions was between the subjects and the community.

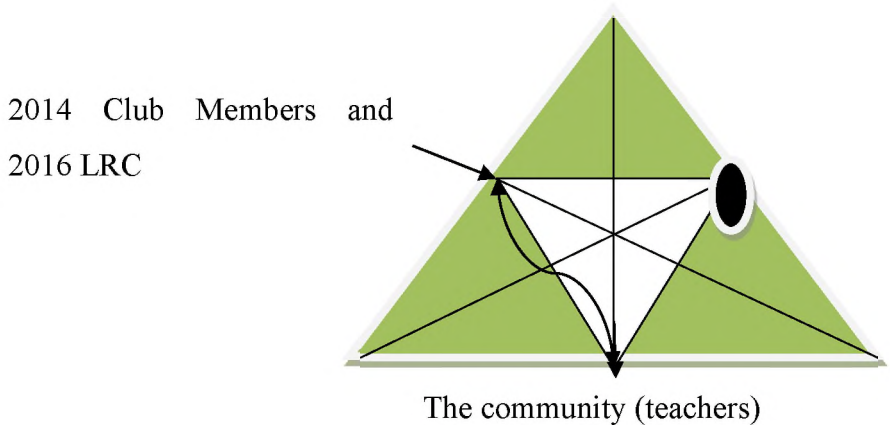

Figure 5.4 Secondary contradictions – the community (teachers)

Contradictions between the subjects and the community (teachers) were identified in both the 2014 project and the 2016 current LRC. The absence of the guardian teacher from the 2014 club's activities caused tensions in the club until they started raising concerns such as: "if teacher could be present at every meeting" (see Section 4.3.2). Furthermore, the guardian teacher added that "teachers that are overseeing the 2016 LRC … we do not really get time to get involved" (I). These contradictions showed circumstances that "constantly demotivated learners to take up their leadership responsibilities seriously" (T1). Perhaps one may argue that the source of the contradiction may have derived from the apartheid ideology teachers of that time had, which was not to prioritise learners as leaders. According to Harber (1993), educational philosophy before the Namibian independence would not allow learners to question teachers. Perhaps with that ideology in mind, current teachers might not see the need to motivate these learners to raise their voice. As a result, GT urged that "teachers need to improve their support towards these LRCs" (I). The improved support will enhance learner leaders to work together with adults in bringing change to the school and to be responsible citizens (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Furthermore, the LRC members would be developed into authentic leaders (Whitehead, 2009).

To conclude, another secondary contradiction between the subject and the division of labour surfaced.

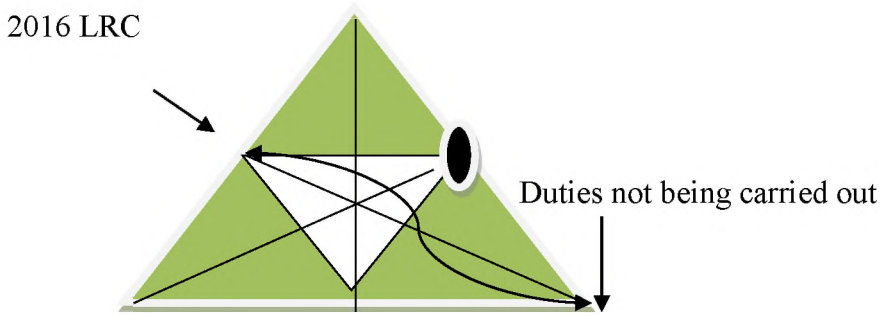

Figure 5.5 Secondary contradictions – duties not being carried out

Even though data from the interview with the guardian teacher showed that "learners were informed on what their roles are" (I), it did not show a schedule were the LRC were divided into different tasks – this in turn caused tension and contradictions between the subjects and the division of labour elements. Therefore, redistribution of power as a requirement of distributed leadership was not realised (Lumby, 2013).

Furthermore, the absence of the schedule led the LRC to listen and do what "the teachers or the principal tell them to do" (LRC 16). This situation left the leadership power in the hands of the school authority due to the accountability and responsibility they have (Harris, 2004). Hence, this contradicts contemporary leadership thinking which involves sharing and collaboration. The contradictions opened the door for "some people not to do their duties at all" (LRC1, Q). According to Lumby (2013), the LRC members became people who felt like they were not part of what was happening. Instead they ended up behaving inappropriately, which hindered their leadership development.

Solutions to the above contradictions were modelled in two workshops with the participants as discussed below.

5.8 Proposed solutions modelled by research participants during the two Change Laboratory workshops

The Change Laboratory workshops were used at the research site to enrich my own and the participants' understanding of how change could be promoted through collective participation of the participants (Sannino, 2008). Two separate workshops with teachers and learners helped to model solutions for the contradictions that surfaced. Subsequently, it emerged that

the solutions modelled by the two groups were identical and for that reason the solutions are discussed together to avoid repetition.

5.8.1 Model solutions to contradictions and tensions on LRC lacking teamwork

In accordance with the contradiction, the LRC themselves presented the above tension and the same contradiction was further observed by me as a researcher (see Section 4.6.2). One of the participants emphasised that there was no team-work within the LRC. To enhance teamwork within the LRC there was a strong feeling that *teamwork building exercises should be carried out more regularly at the school*. Moreover, the workshop argued that LRC members should be involved in management meetings.

5.8.2 Model solutions to contradictions on lack of discipline within the LRC

It emerged from the data that the LRC members' ill-discipline affected their leadership roles. The tension was presented by teachers and confirmed by the LRC in the FGI (see Section 4.6.2). Workshop participants suggested that *undisciplined LRC members should be removed from the body*. The suggestion is in line with the Education Act 16 of 2001, sub-section 3:

> A member of the LRC vacates office, if such member is found guilty of misconduct under these regulations, or resigns from office after giving a 30 days' notice to the chairperson of the LRC, or ceases to be a learner of the school.

The participants further suggested that following the removal of a member from the body, *disciplinary measures should be implemented for those contravening rules. Furthermore, school rules should be displayed in classrooms whereby learners could see and read them. Rules should be discussed regularly at school.*

I now move on to discuss modelled solutions to the secondary contradictions mentioned in 5.7.2 above.

5.8.3 Model solutions to contradiction on the issue of non-availability of enough materials to carry out the cleaning campaigns

It was agreed that the lack of cleaning materials hindered the cleaning campaign at the school, leaving the school environment dirty and littered. Moreover, this caused the 2014 club members to abandon their responsibilities. Hence, participants proposed the following: *The school should look for sponsorship that can provide enough materials for cleaning*

campaigns. In the same vein, it was proposed for the parents to be involved by donating tools and cleaning materials and for them to participate in a cleaning campaign with the learners. The groups further proposed the Windhoek municipality to be contacted during the campaign for them to provide rubbish bags and gloves and their big trucks to be used as well.

5.8.4 Model solutions to contradiction on issues of teachers not supporting the LRC

The contradictions were presented by ex-club members of 2014, current 2016 LRC members and by the teachers. The contradictions had a negative impact on the learner leadership development as discussed in section 5.6.3. As a result, proposed solutions were suggested by the participants after they analysed the mirrored data. The workshop participants presented the following solutions for the tension: *Teachers should support the LRC by giving them productive ideas on leadership. Furthermore, open communication between the LRC and teachers should be instilled at school. For teachers to develop and support the LRC, they should supervise and monitor the LRC regularly. It was further agreed by the group, to enhance the support, teachers should to lead by example. The group further indicated that the school's management input and encouragement is vital to them. They wanted the teachers to know that it is everybody's responsibility to guide and support the LRC at school.*

5.8.5 Model solutions to contradiction centered on the issue of having ineffective workshops and training

Regarding the above contradiction and tension, it was revealed from the data that financial constraints the school experienced was the source of the problem. Being aware of financial constraints discussed in Section 5.6.2, the participants suggested the following: *The school should provide enough and continuous workshops as possible, this will help the LRC to get advice from their teachers on how to be exemplary and good leaders. Exchange programmes should be encouraged with other schools for the LRC to learn about leadership from their peers. Quarterly meetings should be encouraged; this will assist also to develop leadership within the LRC besides workshops and training.*

5.8.6 Model solutions to contradiction centered on LRC members not carrying out their duties

The above contradiction was discussed to analyse the roles of the LRC members and how this contributed to their carrying out their duties effectively. The lack of teamwork discussed above contributed to this tension, which in turn contributed to the failure to accomplish a distributed form of leadership. Thus, participants proposed the following suggestions to

encourage the LRC to carry out their duties effectively. The participants felt that: *The LRC should be encouraged to do their duties effectively. Thus, encouragement can be given in different forms such as giving prizes or handing over certificates of appreciation, for example. Furthermore, being accountable for tasks given to the LRC will encourage the group to work hard on carrying their duties effectively. Hence, accountability will be achieved if individual LRC members are assigned specific tasks and responsibilities.*

Having discussed the modelled solutions to the six contradictions that surfaced during the study, I now conclude the chapter.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed data presented in Chapter Four that spoke to my research questions and goals of this research. Furthermore, I also discussed contradictions and tensions that were identified at the research site, using data presented in the previous chapter. Finally, I discussed key solutions that were modelled and suggested by the participants during the two Change Laboratory workshops. I now move on to conclude my research study in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present the main findings of learner leadership development in a primary school in Namibia. The chapter then highlights the significance of the study. Thereafter, I will present recommendations for learner leadership practices and for future research on the learner leadership concept. Finally, the chapter will highlight the limitations of the study and then a brief conclusion of the chapter will be given.

6.2. Summary of research findings

The main findings that will be presented aim to answer the following research questions:

- What were the perceived causes of the non-sustainability of the learner leadership club at the school?
- How is the notion of learner leadership currently understood in the school?
- How is leadership developed on the LRC?
- What enables and constrains leadership development on the LRC?

In response to my first research question, findings revealed that my initiative of starting a learner leadership club in 2014 had good intentions. The club operated well and issues that mattered most to the learners such as littering, were raised. Furthermore, social involvement was experienced, and broader influences were achieved. However, the club was not supported by the formal school system. Thus, the club could not sustain itself after I finished my 2014 BEd Honours course.

Due to the education policies that do not acknowledge learner leadership clubs at schools and perhaps due to it being a new concept introduced at the school, learners and teachers started abandoning the club's activities to join other legislated clubs. Furthermore, the non-acknowledgement of the learner leadership club at school placed club members in vulnerable positions as they were mocked and teased by others. As a result, the club's purpose and

interest in the social care of the school started deteriorating as members could not face the mocking. Thus, eventually they stopped the operation of the club and this further diminished any leadership opportunities. In conclusion, based on the above summarised findings the club ceased to operate after 2014.

On the notion of how learner leadership is understood, answering the second research question, findings revealed conflicting perceptions of learner leadership. Respondents' perceived learner leadership as management rather than leadership. Possibly this may be because it was emerging as a relatively new phenomenon at the school and moreover remains under-researched in an African context (Grant, 2015; Grant & Nekondo, 2016). Beyond their managerial perceptions, respondents revealed that they thought leadership was the result of socialisation. The respondents' interpreted that leadership activities were carried out collectively in collaboration, showing a sharing of responsibilities and tasks in their social context. As a result, participants seem to have produced a form of distributed leadership by interacting in this collaborative manner and leadership exerted influence as division of labour was exercised. Even so, views of traditional theory dominated the discussion on how leadership was understood.

Findings revealed that participants believed that anyone can lead, and they associated the learner leaders with certain characteristics. Furthermore, it transpired from data that leadership was seen as a single leader in charge of others. Hence, the above views portray a narrow and outdated view of leadership, contradicting the studies desired outcome of developing leadership in a contemporary perspective.

Findings in response to the third research question revealed that LRC members were engaged in different roles to enhance their leadership development. Hence, the different roles were in line with distributed leadership which advocates sharing of different roles by many. Furthermore, active participation in the different roles contributed to collaboration and social involvement in helping to develop leadership within the LRC. But, as presented earlier, developing leadership in the contemporary view was limited and a traditional leadership view dominated. Thus, findings revealed that learners were placed in roles of policing others or in maintaining discipline at school. For these learners to carry out their policing roles,

characteristics such as bravery and strength were identified as ones that these learner leaders possessed. This suggests an "outdated traditional leadership view" (Uushona, 2012, p. 106).

Even though a traditional type of leadership was evident, data revealed that few opportunities for leadership development existed. One of the opportunities was when teachers collaborated with learners which contributed to leadership development. Findings further revealed that teacher-learner interaction during teaching encouraged the learners to further develop leadership skills. It transpired that teaching methods and/or artefacts used, allowed learners to work in groups sharing responsibilities. As a result, the process seemed to promote distributed leadership which is informed by CHAT as a framework.

The other main support for learner leadership development at the school, was the leadership training. Findings revealed that training as a mediating tool, shaped and moulded the LRC members into good leaders and prepared them to lead in their social context. Moreover, findings revealed that leadership training constructed social values in these LRC members, as they were equipped to face the daily social challenges in the school context. Furthermore, findings revealed that democratic opportunities were introduced to the LRC, which meant that those who had not been able to raise their voice were encouraged to do so. Thus, this would develop learner voice within the LRC, who were the subjects of the study.

Findings that answered the fourth research question will be summarised in the next two sections. Section A being the enabling factors and section B being the constraining factors.

Few enabling factors towards learner leadership development transpired at the case study school. Findings revealed that the school enjoyed a positive environment that had a significant influence on learner leadership development. Furthermore, findings revealed that the positive environment contributed to the LRC being trusted with leadership opportunities. Hence, the environment created a sense of ownership amongst the learner leaders. As a result of this feeling of ownership towards their school, all LRC members were motivated to attend the leadership training. The findings also revealed that the good attendance enabled the LRC to gain knowledge on leadership. Another enabling factor was the prior knowledge the LRC had which was twofold. The data showed that the LRC had prior knowledge on leadership from their teachers. This type of knowledge was enabled through teaching methods that the

teachers applied. The other prior knowledge came from parents. It transpired that parents were role models to their children thus encouraging a positive influence on leadership development. As a result, this collective positive society or community enabled learner leadership development at Marula PS.

This next section deals with the findings on constraining factors towards leadership development. Several constraining factors were experienced concurrently with the enabling factors. Findings revealed a few challenges that the school experienced in developing learner leadership. To begin with, it transpired from the findings that a few irregularities were experienced during the LRC selection process. The selection process is run by class teachers who select learner leaders according to certain characteristics they assume fit a good leader. Hence, the school imposes leadership onto the learners. Furthermore, due to that process, democracy and social justice within the LRC is limited. Once again, a traditional view of leadership prevailed, when compared with a contemporary view of leadership.

Another constraining factor was finances, findings revealed. The tight budget the school has, contributes to a small budget for leadership training. Policies are powerless in developing learner leadership and the fact that leadership training is not stipulated in formal government policies makes it a huge constraining factor (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008). Hence, due to cost cutting, training was held over one day and findings revealed that this was not sufficient enough to develop leadership within the LRC.

It transpired that a lack of teacher commitment was the next constraining factor. Findings revealed that lack of teacher commitment towards leadership development started from the learner leadership intervention of 2014 through to the 2016 LRC, contributing to tensions between the subjects and the community. The poor commitment contributed to the non-sustainability of the 2014 club, as previously stated. Likewise, in 2016, the poor commitment contributed to the LRC neglecting their duties and losing focus. Hence, findings revealed that this contributed to ill-discipline amongst the LRC. It emerged from the findings that the ill-discipline of the LRC could not shape and change the lives of others, and instead of shaping others they misbehaved with their fellow learners.

The outcome of the LRC members' behaviour contributed to a lack of initiative, which was another constraining factor. Hence, coming up with productive initiatives was a challenge and this hindered learner leadership development at the case study school. Findings further revealed that social bonds, poor collaboration, team-work and meeting attendance were the most important areas affecting learner leadership development at the school.

In conclusion, with these constraints, whatever good plans the school had for developing learner leadership were hard to realise. This was why the study surfaced constraints as contradictions in a Change Laboratory workshop and modelled possible solutions that might serve as a guide for effective leadership development.

Having summarised the findings of the study from Chapter Five, I now focus on the significance of the study.

6.3 Significance of the study

The goal of this study is to establish ways and strategies on how to develop leadership within LRC in a Namibian primary school. The study might propose that learner leadership clubs be established as an extra-curricular activity in schools, such as soccer clubs and others. Having learner leadership clubs at schools is not a common practice in Namibia and this study might contribute to foster further research on the matter.

Furthermore, prioritising the establishment of learner leadership clubs might contribute to learner leadership development at grassroots level, before learners are selected onto LRC structures. Moreover, having early learner leadership development might limit constraints that the study findings have highlighted.

The contribution that the study offers might help raise awareness with policy makers in the Ministry of Education, to try incorporate the concept of learner leadership during policy development. Having the concept of learner leadership instilled at schools will motivate learners to develop a sense of ownership and eagerness to lead in their school context. Moreover, using CHAT as an analytical tool could help in solving tensions and contradictions that emerge in institutions.

Moreover, the study may trigger future scholars or researchers to further their investigation on the matter, in the effort to raise awareness on the issue of learner leadership development. Perhaps moving into the third generation of CHAT, analysing two different schools as different activity systems might help create a broader picture of the phenomenon. With this, recommendations for practice will now be given.

6.4 Recommendations for practice

To ensure effective learner leadership development in Namibian primary schools, I recommend the following:

- Learner leadership clubs should be introduced at schools as an extra-mural activity. In having leadership clubs, learners will have opportunities to learn about leadership before being elected onto the LRC.
- Schools should have exchange programmes on leadership within the cluster or region to expose young leaders' leadership potential by sharing experiences.
- LRC selection process should be an annual activity on the school calendar. Learners should be part of the selection process to ensure a fair and democratic process.
- The school should formulate a clear internal policy on LRC roles to ensure even distributed leadership.
- Sufficient budget allocation should be done for LRC training.
- Training should be carried out over two to three days at least three times a year. This should be done every semester, to refresh the LRC on their roles and duties.
- The Ministry of Education should establish clear guidelines on regional or national LRC training.
- The culture of holding LRC meetings should be set to at least once per month. When this happens the LRC will keep track of their leadership roles.
- As educators who want to ensure the Namibian future leaders, teachers should start supporting LRC members with their duties.

I will now further explore the research by giving recommendations for further research.

6.5 Recommendations for further research

The purpose of the study is to investigate leadership development of learner leaders. Hence, it was a pleasure to read a few research works conducted on learner leadership in Namibia, yet still more work needs to be done. Thus, I encourage interested researchers to take the

investigation further. A few of those who have done research on the phenomena, focused on learner leadership at secondary schools. For that reason, I suggest to potential researchers to focus on exploring leadership development at primary schools in Namibia. I feel that instilling leadership development at a primary school level, would be the greatest investment that will reap great benefits at secondary schools.

6.6 Limitations of the study

As much as I would have liked to do more research, constraints such as time and the scope of the study restricted me, thus there were limitations on the study. Furthermore, the study was context-bound, working with a small sample of the population, comprised of the LRC members, 15 teachers, five HODs and one parent. Furthermore, the study was limited to one primary school in the Khomas region which hosts close to 43 primary schools. With these statistics in mind, findings cannot be generalised as they are based on the behaviour of a small group (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). However, the above limitation might not prevent readers from confidently transferring the findings to their own unique situation. Moreover, the transferable findings I believe to be rich as they were generated using an interpretative paradigm. The paradigm allowed me to gather live experiences from participants and to develop thick detailed descriptions of the study findings that readers might be able to apply to their own situations. According to Stake and Trumbull (1982) readers might generate new experiences from the study and add to the old ones. Besides, according to Payne and Williams (2005), sound generalisation is possible in a large-scale physical system which interpretive researchers are not interested in.

Another limitation to the study might have been my position as an HOD and inside researcher. Participants might have felt threatened and might have seen themselves taking part in the study for the sake of pleasing their supervisor. As a result, stable information might not have been offered during the research. Furthermore, as an inside researcher who is familiar with the participants, I might have selected the participants for the incorrect reasons and this could threaten the validity of the study. Hence, being aware of the consequences that validity threats might have to the study, ethical considerations were strictly adhered to.

Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, working with one case study school limited me from expanding broader knowledge on the area of research. Moreover, the research was limited to learners and teachers and perhaps involvement from parents, school inspectors or even institutional workers, might have added value on how leadership can be developed in schools. Thus, gaining broader knowledge could have guaranteed thicker description of the findings, bringing another aspect to the study.

6.7 Conclusion

The study aimed to develop learner leadership at Marula PS. The study was prompted by the non-sustainability of the learner leadership club established in 2014 at the case study school. The non-sustainability initiated a call for research on learner leadership. The study was to investigate why the non-sustainability of the club occurred, investigating if there were poor leadership development strategies and how leadership could be further developed on the 2016 LRC.

It emerged from the study that ministerial policies affected the sustainability of the learner leadership club. Furthermore, it was also noted from the study that the concept of learner leadership was understood as management rather than leadership. Even more, the concept was understood more in a traditional view of leadership rather than the contemporary view that the study tried to address. On a positive note, the study indicated there was a support system that enabled learner leadership development at the school. The support system drove the LRC body to function.

However, within the support system there were challenges that hindered learner leadership development. Thus, I urge other researchers to investigate further in this area, to enhance and develop learner leadership in primary schools as well.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire to ex-learner leadership club members:

1. How was the learner leadership club managed last year (2014)? (Please elaborate)

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What challenges did you experience during the learner leadership club intervention in 2014?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. This year the club was not operational, what has prevented the club from functioning?

_____

_____

_____

4. What changes or actions should have been put in place for the club to progress in 2015?

_____

_____

_____

5. What do you suggest, what must be done for such clubs to take place in primary schools without any preventions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B1

Q1 -- Questionnaire - Learners

1. In your own view what is a leader?

_____

_____

_____

2. In your own opinion how do you observe other learners being leaders?

_____

_____

_____

3. (a) Do you consider yourself being a leader one day and why?

☐ Yes ☐ No

(b) If so why, or why not?

_____

_____

_____

4. How are the learners involved in leadership roles at school?

_____

_____

_____

5. How does the school support learner leaders?

_____

_____

_____

6. How do you understand the term learner leadership?

_____

_____

Appendix B2

Questionnaire – Teachers and SMT

1. In your own view what is leadership?

_____

_____

_____

2. How do you understand the term **learne**r leadership?

_____

_____

_____

3. In your own opinion how do you perceive learners taking up leadership roles?

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you observe any gladness within the learner leaders? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If so why, or why not?

_____

_____

_____

5. How are the learners involved in leadership roles at school?

_____

_____

6. Could the school be doing more to support the development of learner leadership? Elaborate, or give some examples.

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C1

Q2 – Interview - Principal

1. How was the club run?

2. In your observation were the club members fully involved? [Follow up – how were they involved, give examples ...]

3. What support or guidance did the club members get during the operation? [Follow up – was the support adequate? Could they have received more support?]

4. Do you think the club achieved anything? What did they achieve, please give any examples or benefits the school received.

5. Do you think the club helped to develop leadership among learners? How?

6. How do you feel about the sustainability of the club? Please elaborate more on it.

7. The club failed to sustain itself ... why do you think this was the case?

8. In your opinion do you think the non-sustainability of the club affects the school?

9. What measures can be done to sustain the learner leadership club in the school?

Appendix C2

Q3 -- Interview – Guardian Teacher

1. How did you like the training?

2. What was great about the training?

3. Apart from what you learned, what else would you have preferred to learn from the training?

4. Do you think the training changed the LRC leadership abilities? [In what way?]

5. In your opinion what more can be done to promote leadership development in LRC at training?

6. How will the trained LRC benefit the school at large?

Appendix C3

Focus Group Interview

1. What was the training like?

2. What was great about it?

3. What did you learn from the training?

4. Apart from what you learned, what else would you have preferred to learn from the training?

5. How did the training empower you as LRC leaders?

6. How would the training benefit the school community?

7. Can you think of one thing you learned that was very significant to you as leaders?

Appendix D

Q4. Observation Schedule

1.	Leadership Approaches	• What interesting leadership methods do they use? • Do they show creativity? • Initiative? • Confidence? • Do they take any decision or take action? • Do they share responsibility?
2.	Power gradients and participation	• Any evidence of power imbalances between the LRC, eg talking, directing, listening. • How actively involved are the: • Boys • Girls • To what extent did these power gradients influence the development of leadership? • Any team work amongst the group. • Who delegates more? Boys or girls?
3.	Knowledge	• What prior knowledge do these learners appear to have on leadership? (From their home or even from their teachers). • Any evidence of two-way knowledge exchange (at meetings, break-times). • What other networks or system do these learners seem to draw on /influenced by? (Who are their role models?)
4.	Social, norms and values	• What values are they portraying as leaders? • How is their leadership practice? a. Do they stand on their own? or b. Is support/ guidance needed?

Appendix E1

Statement of Consent

I _____ (full names of parent), hereby confirm that I understand the content of this exercise and the nature of this research study and that I have permitted my child _____ (learner's name) to participate in the research. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw my child from this study at any time.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of learner: _____ Date: _____

If you are not participating, please indicate by ticking in the box below:

No ☐

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for you own records

Appendix E2

Enquries: J.Tjihuro

Cell: +264814900098/+264813523164

Email: jtjihuro@gmail.com

P.O.Box 70775

Khomasdal

Windhoek

01 September 2016

The Principal

Ministry of Education

Windhoek

Namibia

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to conduct a research study at a primary school in circuit 1, Khomas Region.

I am a student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. As part of my course I have to complete a research study continuing from my BEd Honours intervention of 2014 I had at the school. My research topic is leadership development within a Learner Representative Council (LRC). My wish is to develop leadership within LRC at the case study school. I plan to conduct the data collection process from September to November 2016 and in early January 2017 I plan to have two workshops with the participants I administered the data tool to.

The participants in this research study are voluntarily and are free to withdraw their participation at any time.

It is against this background that I am requesting your permission to conduct the research study at your primary school in the above-mentioned circuit.

Thank you in advance I count on your usual generosity and prompt response.

Yours faithfully

Jacqueline Tjihuro

Student no: 13t7246

Principal: [redacted]

Approval granted or not

Appendix E3

Declaration

I _____ (Full name) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and the nature of this research study. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

_____ _____

Signature: Principal/ HOD/ Teacher **Date**